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White Men Follow After

A collection of stories about the Okoboji-Spirit lake region

By

HATTIE P. ELSTON

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Dedication

To my Grandfather and Grandmother, George and Inez Elston, who, by following the old trails into a new country, gave to me, a pioneer's grandchild, the natural heritage of the lakes I love.

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MISS HATTIE P. ELSTON

Arnolds Park, Iowa

34826

White Men Follow After

by LEON A ZEMAN

Foreword

Since 1929, it has been my privilege to write news and feature stories of the Okoboji-Spirit lake region for a group of daily and weekly newspapers and press services.

As I wrote these things at my own doorstep, I realized the stories were not only recording history as it was being made, but also much of the unwritten yesterdays. From the hundreds of columns I have written about the lakes, these stories have been chosen for their general interest.

I make no claim as a historian, although each story has been checked for accuracy. I expect readers will find many things not as they remember, and there will be some errors.

Friends and strangers alike have supplied information from which these stories were written. To each, I tender sincere thanks.

Especially am I indebted to the late Prof. F. I. Herriott of Drake university, who furnished much valuable information about this region's earliest history, and the late Miss Kate M. Smith of Okoboji, who encouraged this work and gave her generous permission to use any part of the "History of Dickinson County, Iowa", written by her father, R. A. Smith.

I am further indebted to Leon A. Zeman, former Cedar Rapids artist, whose allegorical illustration of the title is the frontispiece; to Mrs. L. F. Williamz now of Pomona, Calif., who urged this volume and has permitted me to present any of the copyrighted pictures taken by her late husband, the "Yankee Photographer" of Spirit Lake;

To my brother, John E. Elston of La Crosse, Wis., who first insisted that I write about the lakes; and to my father, G. H. Elston, who has not only encouraged me but has served as a ready-reference book of this region's history, having lived here since 1880 and taken part in many of the events here recorded.

If by these stories, I have preserved some small bit of history; if I have answered the questions guests are wont to ask; if, to those who follow after the red men and pioneers, I have made the appreciation of Iowa's blue-water lake more keen — then I have succeeded in this pleasant task.

HATTIE P. ELSTON

Arnolds Park, Iowa,
January 1, 1946.

Iowa Great Lakes Map

Lakes with points of interest.

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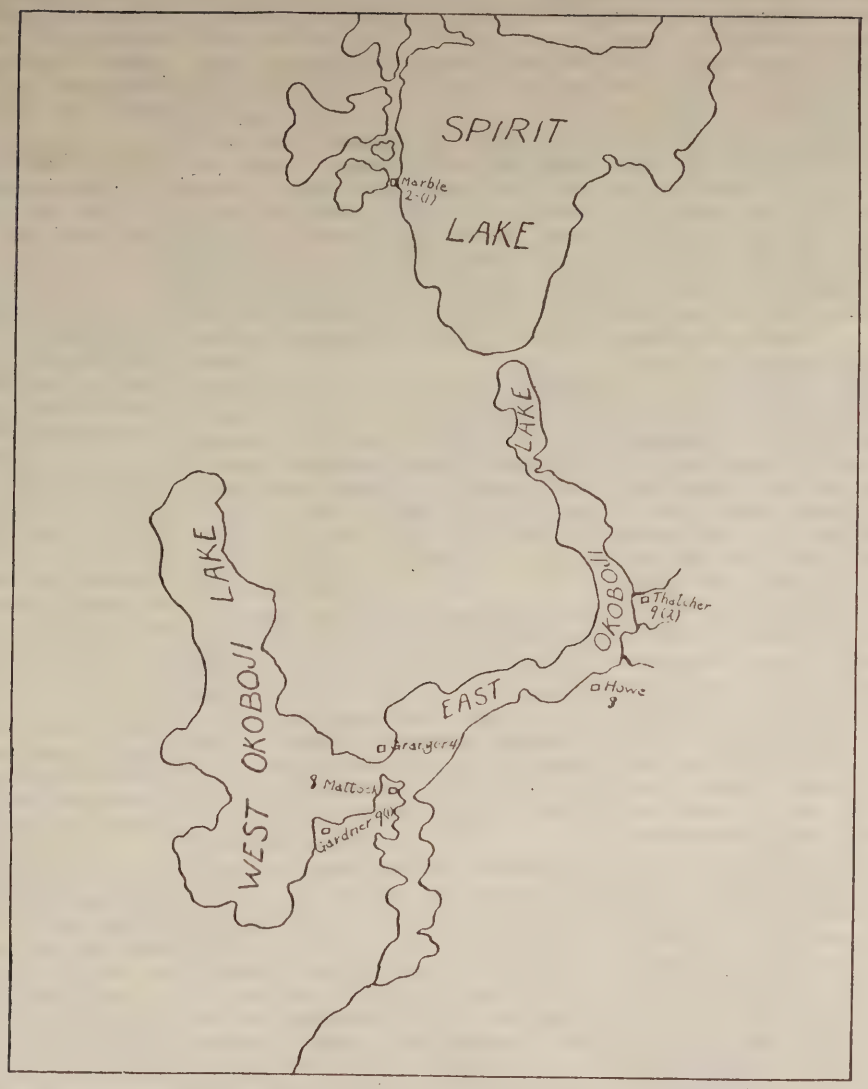
Cabin Sites



Map of the lake region, drawn by Miss Mable Henderson, shows the locations of the various families around the lake when the Indians arrived, with the number of persons in each cabin. They are as follows: Gardner, 9; Mattock, 8; Granger, 4; Howe, 8; Thatcher, 9; Marble, 2. Captives were from the Gardner, Thatcher, and Marble cabins, one, two, and one.

"Once upon a time . . . ."

White Men Followed Indians Into Land of Plenty Left by Great Glaciers

Once upon a time, in the long, long ago, there may have been a huge gathering of the tribes and a great council in which the chieftans of the heavens and the earth met in splendid ceremony to apportion the lands. The greatest red men looked upon the broad prairies, the winding rivers, the lush valleys and the mountains, to set aside the destiny of each.

Midway of the great oceans, they favored this place for a thriving city, that place for a peaceful village, and the broad spaces of Iowa for farm lands fertile to the plow and honest toil and simple livlihood.

When this was done, there remained the sparkling pools left behind by receding glaciers; teaming with fish and fowl; guarded by woodlands too beautiful for axe and plow; the sheltered, peaceful, inspiring lands wherein once had dwelt the tribal gods.

As they pondered the destiny of these sacred lands, the youngest and bravest of the council spoke up saying, "My fathers, you have provided well for the years to come. You have planned great cities for industry, peaceful villages for dreaming, lands to produce foods for the people. You have decided wisely.

"These lakes are richly endowed by the ancient gods. Let us, then, make on these blue waters and shaded woodlands a place for men to play, a perpetual place for our people to find tranquility, beauty, inspiration, and peace."

The great chieftans weighed the words, and they said "It shall be so."

Red men came, bringing their women and children and leaving behind their tomahawks, for here was the land of peace and plenty decreed by the great council. White men followed after, to discover the lure of the lakes. They, in their turn, went forth into the lands and told other peoples. Wagon trails followed prairie paths, and gave way to dirt roads that became paved highways, all leading toward the lakes — the place for men to play.

There is something majestically splendid, something regal, about the deep blue waters of West Okoboji lake, to enchant as they sparkle in the sunshine and gently caress the sands, or rage in the winds and crash against the rocky reefs. There is a fascination to enthrall as the waters are splashed endlessly, restlessly, by the ghosts of the long-gone demons of Spirit lake.

At times, the beauty of West Okoboji lake is so vivid its ragged shoreline with gnarled over-shadowing oaks, sailboats flying before the wind, silver-winged gulls dipping from tattered clouds, all seem to be but a giant back-drop about the reflected blue of heaven, shifting with the hours — changed, perhaps, by the ancient chieftans carrying on the decree of the great council.

There is something mystical when low-flying clouds shut the whole of the demon's lake from view. Red men fell back in awe and believed the restless waves held sinister powers. White men pause in their hurried flight across their years, to hear the broken rhythm of the waves, to look at the sky and find new peace. It lies like a beautiful untamed thing, and fortunate is he who may gaze across its wide expanse and along its sandy beaches ceaselessly splashed by troubled waters.

Whether it be moonlight dancing across the water or sunlight lacing the branches of a huge elm tree; whether it be gay laughter from a bathing beach or rhythmic music from a dance band; whether it be a sunrise vigil of a lone fisherman or the flash of a golf ball across the green — this is the place for men to play.

Of what the great council apportioned, the destiny of these lakes left by the glaciers, thousands who come here annually will vow approval. It is a place to forget the every-day, a place of rest and entertainment, and easy enough to believe that now and then a fairy dances under a gnarled oak tree in the moonbeams, or devils ride the angry waves on storm-tossed nights.

Among Iowa's counties, Dickinson is unique. It rests on the peak of the great divide between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Its many lakes mean Dickinson has the least tillable land. It's soil was reddened by the blood of its first pioneers, in the only Indian massacre within Iowa borders. That tragedy first called attention to these lakes, which now have the largest summer population of any midwest playground.

The first white men to look upon these waters were probably the French voyageurs, those tireless, fearlesss, mysterious advance agents of civilization who left their "footsteps in the dark" but no records. They called these lakes simply "Lac d'Esprits" and passed on to other white men the tales of beauty and plenty. It was not until 1856 that several families ventured to build cabins and establish homes on these lakes so far beyond the frontiers, while eastern Iowa was reaching toward majority. The region was then still a vague, unexplored territory known only as "Spirit lake."

Historians call this the "cradle of the Dakota nation", a sacred place. The first white men know it only as "Spirit lake." It was the wildest frontier long after Iowa became a territory. Those two facts may be the explanation of the massacre which first called nation-wide attention to these northwest Iowa lakes, although historians give many and varied reasons.

A treaty had given this country to the white men and the Indians had been given Dahotah lands. The winter of 1856-57 was long and very severe. Food was too scarce everywhere on the snowbound prairies.

That may be the simple story of the massacre of March, 1857. It may be that Inkpaduta and his band of outlaw Wahpekute Sioux Indians found this, too, had become a land of want when they arrived from the starving prairies. In their simple minds, they probably blamed the white settlers for lack of fish and fowl where there had always been plenty. They did not know, and cared less, that the white men were submitting to hunger and hardship.

Inkpaduta was a Satan among red men, savage, crafty, disowned by men of all colors. For six days he directed the ravaging of these shores. Settlers were murdered, livestock was killed, every valuable thing was destroyed, five cabins on the Okoboji lakes and one lonely and apart on Spirit lake were burned and pillaged. War dances were held in the snows red with blood and little of value was left behind.

When they left, they took with them three young wives and a girl. Only two ever again reached safety and freedom. They were Mrs. William Marble, who saw her young husband shot down in their dooryard on Spirit lake, and Abigail Gardner, 14, who saw her household murdered. She was the only one ever to return here to live and spent many years of her later life in the cabin ravaged that fateful day.

The heroic march of 100 men from Webster City and Fort Dodge was the closing chapter in the awful tale that wrote this region into public print and history books. They came with intent to rescue any survivors and punish the Indians. Their hardships and sufferings were terrible, due to lack of proper clothing and food, coupled with extreme cold. They arrived too late; a detail remained to bury the dead; two of the company froze to death enroute home.

At the same time a company of soldiers from Fort Ridgely, Minn., came to pursue the Indians, and they, too, failed. Inkpaduta and his band was never punished.

Thus was the tale of the Spirit Lake massacre; the price those adventuresome home-makers paid for these lakes; the price that first focused public attention here; the cost of our heritage — the Okoboji lakes and Spirit lake.

Seven young men of Red Wing, Minn., were the first to design a project purposely to call attention to this region. They proposed a mail route through here from St. Paul to a point on the Missouri river. Four of them explored the route and arrived here, by way of Sioux City, about July 15, 1856. They chose a site where East and West Okobojis join, built a cabin, called the town "Spirit Lake", and dreamed of a city to be prominent on the mail route. Three were killed by the Indians, the fourth was absent that day. The town of Okoboji now includes their claims.

Some of those who marched with the relief expedition were much impressed with the lakes, although they had only glimpses amid blood-soaked snows and suffered intensely from cold and hunger. They returned as soon as possible that spring and established a second settlement. Since the original city was still held by the Red Wing heirs, a site was chosen south of Spirit lake, for the town of Spirit Lake. A stockade was built, together with several homes and business places. The townsite was platted in 1870, within sight of but not on the lake.

Legends are entirely lacking in the lake region. The reason is simple. Red men were pushed back to land in the Dakotahs, before white men came. The massacre so inflamed the settlers that Indians dared not venture back to this region. There was no common ground. If Indians had stories of this lake region, they never passed them on.

Although French woodsmen are known to have called this region "Lac d'Esprits", research has failed to disclose that the Indians had any special name for it. "Mini" is Sioux for spirit, mysterious, sacred, and "wakan" is water, so their name would have beeen Miniwakan or "mysterious or sacred water." It is believed, rather, that they merely called these lakes "Big Water." There is no known origin or authentic interpretation for the word Okoboji. It is believed to have been a corruption of some Indian word heard by an early settler.

There are two legends of Spirit lake. One is a story dreamed up by a white woman pioneer, the other has no origin quoted. R. A. Fulton, author of "The Red Men of Iowa," published in 1882, wrote that Indians believed the lake to be the home of demons because originally there had been an island on the lake. Warriors who landed there were seized by demons.

Miss Amanda Smith of Okoboji, early-day school teacher and later Mrs. A. L. Buckland, wrote a poem in 1861 for a literary society program. It was about Star of Day, adopted son of a chief, and Pale Face Dove, a captive, and of their flight from Indians. Demons overtook their canoe and took them to the depths of the lake where they dwell forever in a bejeweled cave. Indians never ventured on the waters again. The spirits of the lovers wander the waters restlessly.

The poem meant only to entertain, but it caught popular fancy and was accepted as the true legend. Demons or no, the waters are never quiet on the lake, and white men never found a canoe or parts of a canoe on these lakes.

"Eighty-nine years ago . . . ."

Early Settlers Defenseless When Attacked By Murdering Inkpaduta Band

Eighty-nine years ago — Friday morning, March 13, 1857—Mr. and Mrs. William Marble lingered over breakfast in their snug log cabin on the west shore of Spirit lake. Theirs was the last cabin on the lakes frontier.

The puncheon door was opened by a tall pock-marked Indian, who entered, followed by a file of Sioux warriors. They were cordially received, as Indians had been there before. Mrs. Marble set about preparing food for them.

Marble's gun, a new rifle with a bright red stock, hung above the door. It attracted the visitors and they took it down for inspection. They wanted the gun and rather than offend, Marble made a deal and gave them the gun and $2.50 in money.

Eager to try the new weapon, the Indians ate hastily and set up a wooden target in the dooryard. Marble's gun was emptied just as the target fell over. He ran forward to set it up, and a volley was fired into his back.

Margaret Ann, watching at the window, bounded out of the door, screaming. She was met by two husky braves, broke away momentarily, and was held back while the red men helped themselves to her husband's clothing, stripped the money belt from his waist, and beat his body into the snow. Margaret Ann hoped only for quick death.

The intruders examined the Marble cabin and took everything they fancied and destroyed what they didn't. They killed poultry and livestock while Margaret Ann looked on. Before leaving the place, some of the warriors stripped the bark from a tree and carved a crude record of their deeds. Then the band turned toward camp with the grief-stricken, frightened woman on a horse in their midst. A pennon of victory, once her prized red table cloth, went ahead and her husband's cap was kicked along the trail.

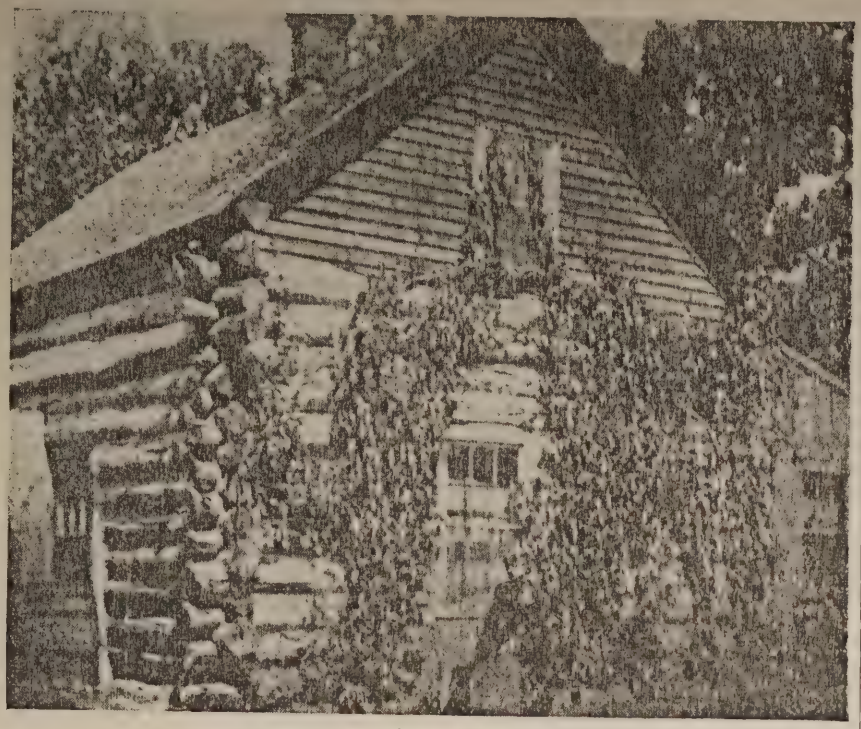
Little is known of the pioneer couple before they arrived to build the first log cabin on the shore of the lake that had been legendary for centuries, cradle of the Sioux, place of beauty found by French trappers, lake of demons.

Possibly William and Margaret Ann had been friends in Darke county, Ohio. Like story-book tales, maybe she married his rival and moved to Michigan. Perhaps he sought her out there, after she became the Widow Phips, and found that he still loved this medium-sized pleasant-looking woman in her early twenties. Maybe William had always lived in Linn county, Iowa, and met Margaret Ann when he visited relatives in Michigan. However it was, she smiled

Victim

Abigail Gardner Sharp.

Gardner Cabin



Gardner Log cabin as a pioneer home.

with favor on the raven-haired William. They were married and moved to Linn county.

How long they lived there, where they lived, no record shows. In the summer of 1856, hearing the call of the frontier, they started toward the setting sun. Wealthy among people of the day, they had carefully packed chests and ample provisions. William's money belt carried $1,000 in gold coins and his wife had a gold watch and many other prized possessions rare on the frontier.

In September, after weeks on the roads, trails, and trackless prairies, they arrived at Spirit lake and found it was beautiful as the legends said. They built a snug cabin on the west shore, with a window overlooking the restless waters.

Theirs was the last outpost of civilization. Nearest neighbors were eight miles southeast in the groves on the lower lakes, now the Okobojis. Across open prairie twenty miles east was a cabin at Granger's point, now Estherville. Northeast twenty miles was the new Springfield of 47 persons, now Jackson, Minn. North, west, southwest — unknown frontier. There is no record of whether or not they even knew their nearest neighbors on the lower lakes.

Perhaps better equipped for the winter than others, the Marbles had come to stay and undoubtedly had ample provisions. Soon after their cabin was completed in November, the most severe winter in Iowa annals swept down upon them. Snow locked all men within their own cabins; blinding, furious storms combined with sub-zero temperatures for months; game disappeared; the nearest store was 75 miles away and trails were buried under several feet of snow.

Mrs. Marble reached camp a mile north of her desecrated frontier home, chilled and ill with fright. She was placed in a tepee with three others, white captives from the lower lakes, to learn the settlement there had been wiped out by Inkpaduta's border outlaws.

The six-day reign of terror in this lake region, which ended at the Marble cabin, was called the Spirit Lake massacre. That was because little was known about the lakes and the region was called, even by the residents here, simply "Spirit lake" from the French "Lac d'Esprits."

Carnage on the Okoboji lakes began Sunday afternoon, March 8. From the Marble cabin the Indians went on to Springfield, Minn., and continued their depredations.

When Inkpaduta came forty miles from Gillett Grove and made camp in the groves that are now Arnolds Park, there were five cabins in this region, sheltering forty-two persons.

At the south, now Pillsbury's point, was the Rowland Gardner family, natives of New York state. They had arrived about July 16, 1856, from Clear Lake. Their number was ten: Rowland and Frances M., the parents; Mary, 20 (Mrs. Harvey Luce); Eliza, 16; Abigail, 14; Rowland, Jr., 6; Harvey Luce; Albert and Amanda Luce, 4 and 1; and Robert Clark and William Wilson, guests from Waterloo. Eliza was visiting in Springfield, Wilson was gone at the time.

South of the straits and northeast of the Gardners', at a point just south of where the two lakes join, lived the Mattock family from Delaware county. He had arrived and built the cabin in July. They were eight in number: James H. and Mary, the parents; Alice, Daniel, Agnes, Jacob, and Jackson, the children; and Robert Madison or Matthesen, 18, who had come to locate a claim for his parents. He had chosen the site now known as Manhattan on the west side of the bigger lake.

North of the straits was bachelors' quarters, where the youths from Red Wing, Minn., lived. They were four, and a guest: Carl Granger, Dr. Isaac H. Harriott, Bertell C. Snyder, William Granger, and Joseph Harshman who was visiting here. They had come from Red Wing, by way of Sioux City, July 15, to found a town site. William Granger was in Red Wing at the time of the massacre.

Four miles northeast and along East Okoboji lake lived Joel Howe, who had come with his family and the Noble and Thatcher families, from Hampton in the fall. In the Howe cabin lived eight: Joel and Millie Howe, the parents; Johnathon, 23, who had arrived from Hampton on Friday; a grown daughter, Sardis, and Alfred, Jacob, Philetus, and Levi.

A mile farther north along the lakeshore lived Howe's daughter, Lydia, 19, with her husband, Alvin Noble, and their son John 2. With them lived their life-long friends, Joseph M. and Elizabeth Thatcher, 19, and their infant daughter Dora. Boarders were Enoch Ryan, a trapper; Morris Markham, a frontiersman; and Asa Burtch, Mrs. Thatcher's brother. Both Thatcher and Burtch were absent, enroute from Waterloo with supplies by ox-team. Ryan, young Howe, and Robert Clark, who had been with them, had come on ahead and arrived two days before.

On the west shore of Spirit lake were two, the Marbles.

In reviewing the massacre story, there are certain facts to be considered.

There were no friendly relations between peoples here. This region was opened by treaty in 1853, but continued to be frequented by bands of roving Indians. They were welcomed, more out of fear than friendship.

The lake region was reputedly the hereditary sacred land of the Sioux nation and encroachment of the whites, especially here, must have seemed unjust to the Indians. They, of course, resented the constant "pushing back" into involuntary exile and the repeated tricks to force them from good hunting grounds.

Settlers were given the right to come here, without any whit of protection. The nearest military post was 100 miles north at Fort Ridgely, Minn. A temporary garrison at Fort Dodge had been abandoned in 1852 to give the Indians reason to start depredations again. Appeals to the congress and the president fell upon deaf ears. The Indians were repeatedly allowed to get away with their outrages.

The winter of 1857 was unsurpassed for severity. Indians were forced to live on lands wholly unsuited to their modes of life. Famine intensified their thoughts of wrongs and supposed wrongs done them. Inkpaduta had no part in the treaty-making that gave this territory away, because he was not allowed in tribal councils.

Inkpaduta, known as Scarlet Point and Red End because he was red-headed, was the son of Wamdisapa (Black Eagle) who was expelled from his own tribe of Wahpekute Sioux to become a wandering outlaw. Inkpaduta was likewise expelled from the male line of his own tribe, for misdeeds. He became chief of his band in 1838 and had a following of from 50 to 150 bad Indians.

In 1857, Inkpaduta was past 50, over six feet tall, strongly built, broad of shoulder, light copper color, coarse-featured, and was near-sighted with sunken sparkling eyes. He was badly pitted by smallpox. He was a natural enemy of the white settlers and respected by neither race. He was known to all as an arch-fiend, a relentless savage, and bloodthirsty leader. He had an overwhelming desire to restore his people's tribal lands.

Whether he was seeking more food when his party arrived at Smithland near Sioux City, in December, is a matter for guessing. Historians cite many reasons for the massacre, but there is no incident or circumstance that seems clear cut enough to fix the immediate cause. He lived near Smithland several weeks, finally had trouble there with the settlers, and was ordered to leave. The settlers were glad to be rid of their hungry visitors.

From Smithland, northeast 100 miles along the Little Sioux River, the Indian trail was that of waste, cruelty, and violence.

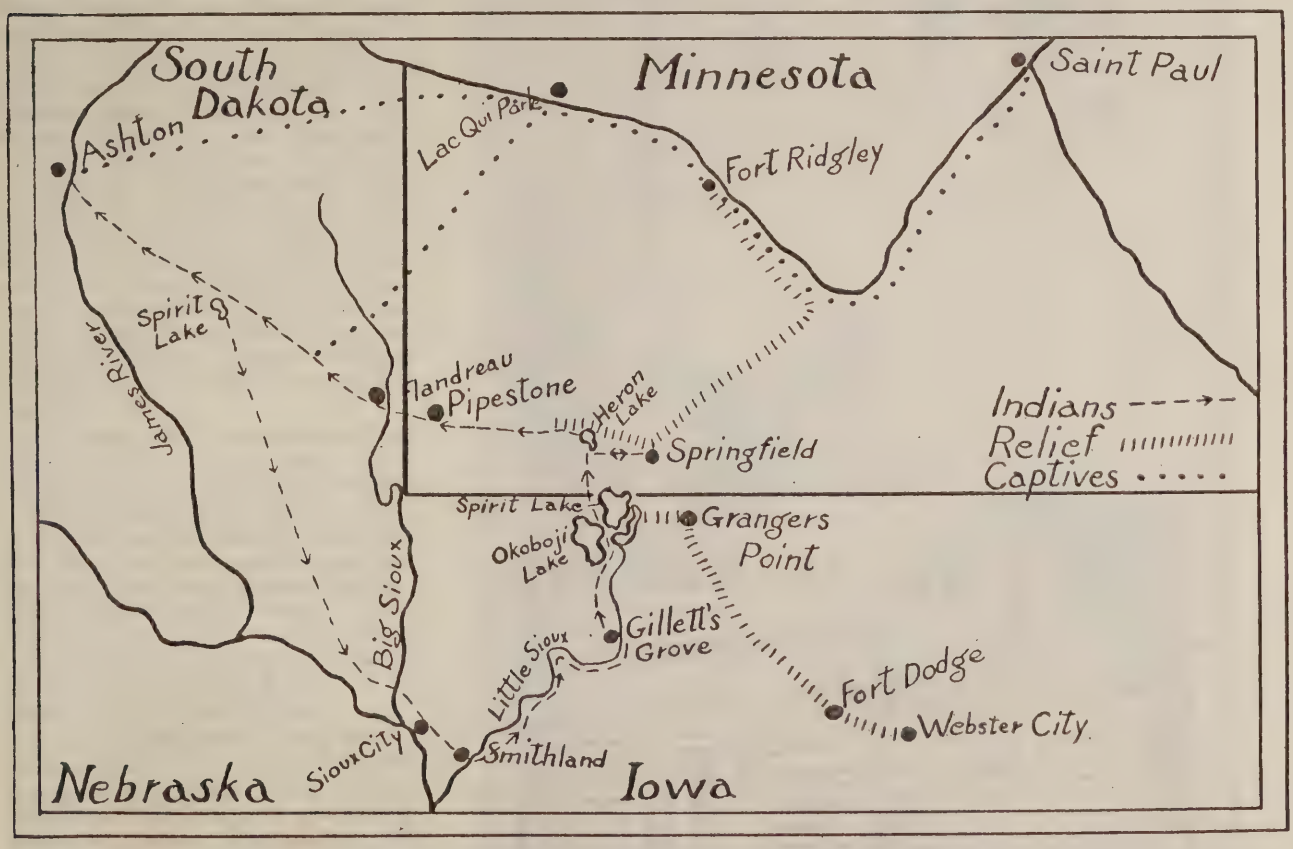
At the present town of Correctionville, the Hammond cabin was ransacked and the owner beaten. At Pilot Rock, food was stolen. At Milford colony near Cherokee, the cabins were pillaged, settlers were insulted, forced to flee, and livestock was killed. At the Waterman home in O'Brien county, the cabin was plundered and the owner strung up by his thumbs. At Peterson in Clay county, the families were terrorized and two women held over night. At Gillett Grove an Indian was waylaid and killed for insulting Mrs. Gillett. The families fled and the Indians retaliated by killing 100 head of cattle and destroying everything possible.

Possibly Inkpaduta was surprised to find settlers had actually dared to build cabins on these sacred shores, when he arrived that Saturday afternoon, March 7. Certainly he was in a fiendish temper after three weeks of rampage, topped off by the death of a buck at Gillett Grove.

Rowland Gardner had planned to leave Sunday for Fort Dodge to get sorely needed supplies, although snow was several feet deep. Ryan and young Howe and Clark had just arrived on Friday.

At the scanty breakfast, with news of the outside world, the plans for the trip were made. The family was startled

Inkpaduta's Route



Map showing parts of four states through which Inkpaduta traveled from near Spirit lake in Dakota to Smithland to the Okoboji lakes, to Heron lake, Minn., to Pipestone, and west. The route of the relief expedition is shown from Webster City to these lakes, and the route of the soldiers from Fort Ridgley. The dotted trail indicates the routes taken by captives when they were returned to civilization. Map by Miss Mable Henderson.

when the door opened and Inkpaduta and a group of his braves stalked in. Food was provided and the red men made welcome as conditions could permit in the little cabin where food was scarce. They were quarrelsome and prowled about sullenly. At noon they withdrew, driving some of the Gardner cattle ahead and shooting them as they went.

Dr. Harriott and Snyder called at the Gardner cabin that morning, to ask Gardner to mail a letter in Fort Dodge, and learned Gardner had postponed the trip because of the prowling Indians. They returned to their own place along the lakeshore.

At the Mattock's cabin, the Indians demanded hay. Slow to part with his entire supply and forty head of cattle to feed, Mattock became alarmed at the sullen invaders. He probably sought the help of the young men across the bay at the Granger cabin.

In mid-afternoon, the Mattock family decided to flee their home for shelter at Granger's. They were all killed in flight, the mother and children ahead, the men defending their retreat. One Indian was injured in the fight and the Mattock cabin and its contents was burned. Carl Granger was killed in his own doorway, head mutilated by an axe, and his bulldog was killed at his side. Their cabin-store was rifled of everything except some bottles of poison.

About sunset, nine bucks appeared at the Gardner cabin, demanding flour. Mrs. Gardner opposed barring the door. Her husband stooped over the flour barrel to scrape the last bit from the bottom. He was shot through the back. Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Luce were killed. Young Abigail took the Luce children into her arms and they were torn away and beaten against trees in the dooryard. The cabin was rifled, and the braves started back to their camp near the Mattock cabin. They took the girl and arrived as the Mattock cabin was burning.

War dances that night celebrated the beginning of the depredations. Early next day several bucks crossed the ice toward the east. They met Joel Howe on the lake and killed and beheaded him. Mrs. Howe and her recently-united family, was busy with Monday morning tasks when the Indians arrived. They were unable to resist. She was beaten with a flatiron. Johnathon was killed by a shot in the face. Sardis and the younger children were clubbed.

At the Thatcher-Noble cabin, the Indians professed friendship. They shot young Noble and Ryan through the back when the hosts turned away momentarily from their guests. The children were torn from their mother's arms and swung against trees. They killed the stock and plundered the house. The young mothers were taken back along the trail to the Howe cabin. There Lydia found her mother dead under the bed, where she had probably crawled after the attack with the flatiron. Jacob, 13, was still alive but unable to talk to her and was clubbed again.

The Indians destroyed and plundered everything in the Howe clearing. They ripped open feather beds, piled the furniture over the bodies in the cabin, and killed every living thing. The broken bodies of the two babies were torn again from their young mothers as the band moved on back to the Mattock place.

Lydia and Elizabeth arrived there to find young Abigail a captive and hear her story of the massacre's beginning.

The Indians had a war dance that night. Tuesday, March 10, they broke camp and moved across the lake west. Wednesday they moved on to Spirit lake. Thursday they rested.

Thus, it was Friday, nearly a week after their arrival at the lake, that the Inkpaduta band arrived at the Marble cabin to find them not at all alarmed. That last stop is also the only remaining geographical landmark of that earliest settlement. Marble lake, near which their outpost cabin stood, is the only name remaining of the first families.

The Indians went north from the Marble's and arrived at Heron lake, 30 miles away, about March 24. Some of them visited the Wood brothers' store at Springfield and spent some of the gold from Marble's belt, for powder

March 26, Inkpaduta attacked Springfield. Settlers had been warned and some congregated at the Thomas cabin. Several whites were injured but the savages were repulsed. Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Stewart and two children and William and George Wood were killed.

News of the massacre was slow in reaching the outside world. Morris Markham, enroute home to the Thatcher cabin from locating strayed cattle, had found the Gardner cabin in desolation when he reached there Monday night. He

Recall the Massacre

Layout used on 75th anniversary—Woman is Mrs. Marble.

wandered into the Indian camp during a war dance and was able to withdraw. He found the Thatcher and Howe cabins in wild disorder and kept awake all night. He set out at daybreak for Granger's Point. Two trappers there agreed to go to Fort Dodge. Markham went to Springfield and was with the group at the Thomas cabin.

March 16, O. C. Howe, R. W. Wheelock, and B. F. Parmenter of Newton, arrived at the Howe cabin, having come to settle. They found death and destruction, hurried on to Thatcher's, and started at once for Fort Dodge.

There was a public meeting at Fort Dodge Sunday, March 23, and three companies of Fort Dodge and Webster City men volunteered to make the march to the lake. They organized under the command of Major William Williams.

Conditions of the expedition were probably the worst ever recorded. There was not a tent in the command and only one blanket for each man. Many had insufficient clothing. There was extreme cold and storms alternating with thaws and blinding sunshine. Marching and counter-marching was necessary to make a road for the oxen. The men and animals floundered through slush and open streams, facing the stinging winds in wet clothing, and slept on the open prairie.

In nine days they reached Granger's Point, now a drive of scant hours. Enroute they found a recent Indian camp and met the Springfield refugees. At Granger's Point they learned soldiers from Fort Ridgely had reached Springfield. The main body of the expedition turned back.

April 2, Capt. J. C. Johnson and 23 men left for the lake. Among them were Thatcher, Burtch, Markham, and Wilson. They reached the Thatcher cabin at 2 p.m. Noble and Ryan were found and buried. Thatcher found his infant daughter at the Howe cabin and returned her home for burial.

Nine persons were buried at Howe's. The headless body of Mr. Howe was found on the ice on the lake and buried nearby. It was found in about 1914 by boys at the Y.M.C.A. camp. Eleven bodies were buried at Mattock's. Granger was buried near his own cabin. The Gardner family was buried there. Several weeks later R. A. Smith found the body of a 12-year-old boy and buried it. Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp claimed the bodies of Luce and Clark were found months later and buried where found. The soldiers buried Marble. No scalps were taken from victims here.

Seven members of the burial detail stayed over Sunday at the Gardner cabin, because of a difference of opinion about a route back to Fort Dodge. The others left Saturday morning. A terrible blizzard whirled across the prairie and overtook them. Captain Johnson and William E. Burkholder became lost and froze to death. Those at the cabin reported a bitterly cold night but they made rapid and safe progress home.

The soldiers met equal suffering. Charles Flandreau, then Indian agent, and Capt. Barnard E. Bee, with Company D, 10th U. S. Infantry, left the fort March 19 after receiving a call for help from Springfield. With no roads, heavy army equipment, and only a vague idea of their destination, the soldiers started the last lap of their trip March 23. That same morning the Indians trekked unincumbered toward the settlement. The soldiers arrived thirty hours too late.

A detail followed the trail of Inkpaduta to Heron lake and beyond and finally gave up when told the trail was old. In fact, they were within sight of Inkpaduta's sentry and that crafty leader was preparing for battle.

About April 1, a detail of soldiers visited the Marble place and buried that victim. He was the last killed, the only one on Spirit lake.

The captives suffered terrible hardships. They were forced to wear moccasins, dress like squaws, carry heavy packs, wade through water and slush, go without food for days, and perform the most menial tasks under constant threat of death. Mrs. Marble, in addition to her heavy pack, often had to carry an Indian child. Young Mrs. Thatcher became dangerously ill.

In six weeks, the band crossed the Big Sioux, stopping enroute at Pipestone, Minn. While crossing that river on a driftwood bridge, Mrs. Thatcher was pushed into the swollen icy river and beaten off in her instinctive struggle for life. A bullet ended her life.

At Skunk lake, 30 miles west of the river, Sounding Heaven and Grayfoot, brothers from the Yellow Medicine agency, purchased a captive. They chose the sad-faced Mrs. Noble but she refused to go, not realizing the import of their commands. Mrs. Marble was taken. She traveled with them from May 6 to 20, to the lodge of Spirit Walker, father of the rescuers, at Lac qui Parle. She was given the best of clothing, food, and treated as a daughter.

Soon the missionaries learned of her presence and found her comparatively happy after months with Inkpaduta, almost a bit reluctant to leave. In a shapeless calico dress replacing the Indian garb, she was taken to Major Flandreau and on to St. Paul.

Dressed in widow's weeds and looking "like a black statue of woe and grief," Mrs. Marble was freed by Governor Medary, May 30. The brothers received $500 each. A purse of $1,000 was made up by St. Paul residents and she took $300 with her and started down the river. The remainder was lost in the bank failures of 1857.

Stories differ as to the subsequent life of Mrs. Marble. Fulton wrote in 1882 that she lived in the William Granger household for some years, was connived out of her receipts from her husband's homestead, and met and married a Mr. Oldham while living with Grangers, in Sioux City.

R. A. Smith's "History of Dickinson County, Iowa" does not tell anything regarding Mrs. Marble after her release from captivity. Later writings state she married a Marion Sillbaugh of Carroll, Iowa, and lived in California until her death in 1911.

Mrs. Marble brought first word of the captives to the outside world. Immediately, three middle-aged agency Indians set out to purchase Mrs. Noble and the girl Abigail. They had, meantime, been purchased by a Yankton Indian who remained with the Inkpaduta band on the way to the Yankton camp on the James river, near the present Ashton. Mrs. Noble was clubbed to death one evning late in May for refusing to obey a command of Roaring Cloud, one of the twin sons of Inkpaduta. Her body was found and buried by the rescue party.

The day Mrs. Marble was released in St. Paul, rescuers arrived in the Yankton camp. They were John Other Day, Beautiful Voice, and Iron Hawk. They made a deal, after several days, and started east at once with Abigail, along the route taken earlier by her friend.

Abigail was released in St. Paul June 22. Her rescuers received $400 each. Subsequently, she was given a purse (most of it was lost in a bank failure) and was taken to Hampton to join her sister Eliza, who had meanwhile married young Wilson, and the relatives of the Noble and Thatcher families.

That summer Abigail married Casville Sharp. For many years she resided in the Gardner cabin, later in a residence nearby after the cabin was converted into a private museum to hold the relics she had collected. Prior to her occupancy, which began about 1895, the cabin was the home of numerous pioneer families. Eliza, who married a Mr. McGowan after Wilson's death, died in Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1918. She never returned here to live. Abbie Gardner Sharp died here in 1921.

Inkpaduta and his band were never punished. Several attempts were made, resulting only in the death of Roaring Cloud in June, 1857. The government proposed with-holding annuities until the band surrendered but that was obviously so unfair and dangerous that they were allowed to escape justice. Inkpaduta and his sons were reputedly present in the Minnesota uprising in 1862 and at the Custer massacre.

High Water

Off the tip of Pillsbury's point, 1932. Note pointed rock.

Low Water

In periods of low water, huge rocks are exposed on the Pillsbury's point reef and one may walk on them out into the lake for some distance.

Bare Rocks

See story on page 47.

Rocks along west bank of Pillsbury's point, 1932.

"Tradition, and known facts . . . . ."

Drake Professor Finds Valuable Lake Region History in Old Family Letters

Tradition, and known facts, centering about the early days of settlers at the Okoboji lakes, often includes the name of young Dr. Isaac Harriott and his heroism on that fatal Sunday afternoon, March 8, 1857, when he died fighting to protect a pioneer woman and her children from the fiendish red men of Inkpaduta's outlaw band.

Residents of the lake region and Iowa were very much interested in April, 1932, when the *Annals of Iowa* began publishing an entirely new narrative about the early days at the lakes. The articles were written by the late Dr. F. I. Herriott, professor of social science at Drake university, and retraced events of eighty-five years ago leading up to and including the first settlement here.

The author was a member of the Harriott tribal group, originally from Scotland to escape religious persecution, but not a member of the immediate clan to which the young hero of 1857 belonged. Professor Herriott was born in New Liberty, Scott county, Iowa, in 1866, and after graduation from Iowa college (now Grinnell), in 1893, he took an active and prominent part in Iowa affairs. He was with Drake university from 1903 until his sudden death in September, 1941. He was widely known as a writer on historial, economic, and political topics and had served in several important state offices.

The narrative concerning young Dr. Harriott was given to the State of Iowa on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the border tragedy known as the Spirit Lake massacre. The occasion for the narrative was the discovery of five letters written by young Harriott between July 3, 1855, when he left his home in Jerseyville, Ill., to seek his fortune in the new northwest territory, and the date of the massacre.

Among the old letters discovered by Professor Herriott after a long and tireless search, are two written by Judge James Harriott, father of Isaac, after the massacre.

The young hero was born Sept. 24, 1833 in Boundbrook, Somerset county, New Jersey, the son of James (later Judge) and Ann Eliza Harriott, and connected by blood ties with the family of Col. Zebulon M. Pike. Here his paternal forbears had lived for nearly a century. In 1838 his parents moved to Jerseyville, Ill. His early life was spent there and at Pekin, Ill., and St. Louis, Mo., where his medical studies were under prominent doctors and physicians.

July 3, 1855, young Harriott bade farewell to his kin and walked to Alton on the Mississippi river. He went by boat to St. Louis and thence north by way of Keokuk to St. Paul. The first of the letters was written upon his arrival there July 12. It was addressed to his grandmother and gives a good description of the trip and contains his prophecies concerning the future growth and influence of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Between the time of his arrival and Jan. 1, 1856, the young doctor decided to locate in Red Wing, Minn. There he entered into a partnership with a Mr. Kellogg, the firm name being "Kellogg and Harriott, Druggists and Chemists." The firm was started probably early in February and was dissolved in May.

During the winter, Dr. Harriott made a trip to the headwater of Lake Superior and wrote home that he was delighted with the country and the climate.

By a reference in a letter dated at an outpost July 2, 1856, it is established that Harriott visited his home in Illinois during May, 1856, going from there to St. Louis in the interests of a gigantic land project and promotion scheme in which he had become interested. The seven associated in the project included a number of leading men in the territory and the nation.

The settlement of Spirit Lake, a townsite on the present site of Okoboji, appears in the letters to have been an incident in the development of this gigantic land project which these men were undertaking.

In fact, Spirit Lake, chosen and "laid out" as a townsite by young Harriott and his fellows, was to be one of the key towns in a series along a proposed mail route conecting St. Paul with some point to be chosen on the Missouri river. The terminus of the route was to be located on an old Spanish claim of 31,000 acres. The location of this claim was not discovered by Professor Herriott.

In one of Dr. Harriott's letters dated "Spirit Lake, Iowa, Thursday, December 11, 1856," he gives the first and only (insofar as known) description of the lake region before the massacre, and a wealth of detail that is of intense interest. The letter is twenty pages long. Facsimilies of the first and last pages are reproduced in the *Annals,* together with a picture of the young hero and some of his associates in the Red Wing company.

The letter definitely places the arrival of the first settlers as July 15, 1856. Dr. Harriott wrote: "We left Sioux City on the third of July, following up the Big Sioux River to the boundary line . . . then turned our course east mostly following the line, troubled much with crossing numerous streams, sloughs, swamps, and marshes. Some days almost melted by the noonday sun and at night devoured by mosquitoes, buffalo gnats, and various other insects indigenous to the vast prairies to the west . . .

"We arrived at Spirit Lake on the 15th where we pitched tent intending to look around and see what the prospects were. After making a pretty thorough examination and finding the prospects favorable to our purpose, we determined to locate a townsite eight miles south of the line and five miles south of the southern extremity of Spirit Lake. Although I suppose they are all called Spirit lake, but Spirit lake is separated from the others by a narrow strip of land some ten roods wide.

"We accordingly moved down to where we intended to or rather expected to see a city builded at some future day, hoping the day not far distant . . . . "

It will be noticed that young Harriott mentioned the exact route here, the living conditions on the prairie, and probably also recorded for the first time that this was a chain of lakes, not one large lake.

Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, in her "*History of the Spirit Lake Massacre,*" states that they arrived first at the lakes and gives the date as July 16, 1856. By young Harriot's letter, it seems definitely established that he and his partners, W. H. Granger and Bartell (or Bertell) Snyder, arrived at least one day earlier.

Another point much discussed in connection with the massacre was priority of cabin-building. The young doctor's letter seems quite definitely to establish the Mattock cabin as the first erected on the shores of the Okoboji lakes.

His letter states: "We busied ourselves a few days assisting Esq. Mattocks to build a log house preparatory to bringing out his family. Mattocks accompanied us from Sioux City with his team, being there in search of a farm on the frontier and not having found one there to his satisfaction concluded to look further and therefore accompanied us and having found one fully to his satisfaction intended to start for his family as soon as he had completed a cabin.

"That cabin was soon completed notwithstanding the ungenerous treatment of ten thousand and one mosquitoes

that were continually buzzing about our eyes and ears and not very seldom taking a nip. As we were probably about the first whites they had ever seen they feasted bountifully upon our sunburned faces and necks to our no small annoyance. When Mattocks had left us, there were but three of us, alone in the vast wildnerness forty miles at least from any settlements and with only provisions to last one week.''

In no part of this letter is there mention made of the Gardner and Luce families. In fact, the paragraph just quoted says ''but three of us, alone''. The three were Harriott, Snyder, and Joseph Harshman. Had the Gardners been here then, it seems logical that he would have mentioned their arrival or presence.

Later in the same letter, Harriott tells of sharing supplies with three families who came in. It is probable he referred to the Thatcher, Noble, and Howe families from Hampton.

He and his companions did not wish to go out for supplies and waste valuable time. He wrote, again as follows:

''Fortunately, however, before we were entirely out of provisions, there came along three men and their families hunting locations for farms, being satisfied with what they found here they concluded to settle, and having a good supply of flour we obtained some from them, but they like ourselves were out of pork as they expected to find plenty of buffalo, elk, bear, etc., of which to supply themselves with meat of which there are some remaining this near civilization, but very wild and difficult to approach within shooting range.

''We now had plenty of flour and hooks and lines with which to take of the finny tribe to our satisfaction. For five long weeks we subsisted on bread and fish served up in the plainest style imaginable with the exception of two or three messes of pigeons.''

The letter seems intensely interesting in that he spoke of the incoming families, the simple facts of living, and gives a splendid picture of the lake region before tragedy struck.

At the termination of this five weeks, which Harriott mentioned, W. H. Granger arrived with supplies that he had gone to Red Wing to obtain for them, he later explained in his letters.

Young Harriott started for Red Wing Oct. 18, arriving back in Spirit Lake some weeks later. He gives a vivid description of the cabin, known for 89 years as the ''Granger cabin.'' It stood upon land now the right-of-way of the Milwaukee railroad, halfway between the railroad bridge and the present Okoboji depot. Harriott called it the ''new mansion'' and declared it was unsurpassed on the border. They moved into the ''hall'' Sunday, Nov. 30, having lived in their tent all summer and fall.

The description is as follows:

''I wish you could see our hall, built of logs chinked with chunks, and daubed with mud, covered with shakes, thatched with hay, contains one room, is 20 feet long and 12 feet wide, eight feet in the clear from floor to ceiling, that is from where the ceiling is supposed to be, the floor is a kind of subsoil two feet below the surface.

''Our hall contains one door and one twelve light window, a fireplace in one end of it twelve feet wide into which we can put a cord of wood at once thereby saving time and labor, only having to make a fire twice a week. In short, I tell you that our hall cannot be surpassed on the frontiers.''

At the time young Harriott wrote the long letter, he was unable to walk, having frozen one foot severely some days prior to that while scouting his claim looking for claim jumpers. He said the snow was fourteen inches deep on the level and that he waded in snow all day. His claim was on the present site of The Inn hotel and along that shore.

Mention has been made repeatedly of the forty head of cattle found butchered at the Mattock cabin. From references in Harriott's letter, it appears that Mattock was wintering the cattle for the Red Wing company. And in addition, that the young men had a considerable supply of food stored at their cabin at the time of the massacre and had expended some $3,000 on the project of the townsite.

Further definite information concerning the massacre is contained in two letters written by Judge James Harriott, father of the murdered young pioneer. It is interesting to note that Judge Harriott served the twenty-first circuit court of Illinois for many years and that he presided over the famed trial of Duff Armstrong at Beardstown in May, 1858, at which time Abraham Lincoln secured an acquittal for the defendant upon a charge of murder, by the use of an almanac in a dramatic trial climax.

News of the massacre reached Pekin, Ill., the home of the judge, about the middle of April. The news came in dispatches in the Minnesota Territory newspapers. In a letter to his mother, dated April 18, Judge Harriott mentions news of the massacre and his hope that the son Isaac may have been one of the prisoners, but he adds ''if he got away I think we would have heard from him before this time . . . . ''

In the second letter written by Judge Harriott, dated July 6, 1857, he gives an account of his journey of a month in which he went to St. Paul, thence to Red Wing, and on to Spirit Lake. He took a metallic casket for burial of his son.

The letter reads: ''started in company with three others across the country mostly uninhabited 160 miles to the Spirit Lake settlement, which took us eleven days to make our way there . . . We opened a hole in which fifteen bodies had been put, examined and turned over ten and the eleventh one proved to be Isaac.

''I cut open his clothes and examined his wounds which were one buck shot in the right breast, ball glanced off and lodged in the right arm, which proved that he had his arm up in the act of firing when he received it, two buckshot and one ball in the back, left arm broken with a ball, the forehead cut entirely off. He had his revolver in his hand when found with three barrels discharged.

''In the wound in his breast he had stuffed one corner of his handkerchief to stop the hemmorhage, his rifle I recovered, still covered with blood. From his finger I took two rings, one having the initials of his name marked inside, his watch happened to be in Red Wing and I also got that, his revolver I could not get.

''I took his body and buried it on a Beautiful Mound on his own claim, there let his remains rest, his claim was and is everything that Nature could do for Beauty. I never saw any place half so handsome in a state of nature.''

Numerous facts may be noted in these letters that are slightly contrary to tradition and written history of the event. It would seem, however, that the letters are of undebatable authority as they were written by the principles of the tragedy soon after it happened. Other writings were many years later, and were intended for public consumption.

In regard to young Harriott, Professor Herriott points out several important facts: that three barrels of Harriott's revolver were empty instead of one as history related; that his wounds show conclusive evidence of a fast and furious fight at the Mattock cabin; that he continued fighting after he was wounded as shown by the handkerchief; that he had no fear of the Indians and probably shot more than the one attributed to him in many tales of the massacre.

It is interesting, also, to note that Judge Harriott said there were fifteen bodies in the grave at the Mattock cabin. R. A. Smith, author of the ''*History of Dickinson County, Iowa*'', who was also a member of the burial detail and the committee that disinterred the bodies for re-interment at the monument, said there were eleven bodies buried there.

The narrative runs to over fifty pages in several editions of the *Annals* and is written in a most interesting and scholarly manner. The reproduction of the old letters and the effort which was required on the part of the author to obtain them, should be appreciated by all residents of the lake region.

The author states than one more letter was known to have been written by

young Harriott, the letter having been mentioned in Smith's history, as follows: "A letter found in the Granger cabin, written by Doctor Harriott to his father, dated March 6, throws some light on the matter. In this letter he refers to the fact that the Indians were camped there, that they were on friendly terms with them, and that they had done some trading with them. Other matters were referred to in the letter which showed that they had no suspicion of danger."

This was the letter, apparently, that Dr. Harriott had asked Rowland Gardner to mail for him in Fort Dodge, having gone to the Gardner cabin on that errand while the Indians were congregated there on that Sunday morning.

The ultimate destiny of the last Harriott letter is not known. Until his death, Professor Herriott tried to find its whereabouts or some fact with regard to what became of the letter. It apparently was never mailed to Judge Harriott or it would have been with the collection of old letters that contained those of the young pioneer doctor. It was believed for many years that Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp had the letter in her collection of relics at the Gardner log cabin, but until his death Professor Herriott was never able to confirm that fact through her heirs, either as to their possession of it or a copy of it.

The old Harriott letters are now in possession of the state historical department and it was Professor Herriott's ambition to locate the missing last letter and add it or a photostatic copy of it, to the collection.

The complete narrative as written by Professor Herriott, started in the April 1932, *Annals* and was followed by another series entitled "The Aftermath of the Spirit Lake Massacre" and still later by a series concerning the life and letters of Judge Orlando Howe. The series deals deeply with this territory and its events and facts concerning the lakes country, and goes into considerable detail with regard to Sioux Indian legends and language as throwing a light on history of this territory. Copies may be obtained for reading at the Iowa Historical department and from many Iowa libraries.

"Every once in awhile . . . ."

Facts Are At Last Obtained About Events Leading to Spirit Lake Massacre

Every once in awhile, a newspaper reporter has a really big story to cover, something with lots of hard work and a bonus at the end. There are times when a newspaper reporter gets a personal thrill out of a story — big, little trivial — but something to be remembered long after the reading public has forgotten.

Such a thrill was mine in an interview written in November, 1936. I had waited several years for the day, before it came. It entailed a trip to Sioux City and an afternoon drive to the small town of Smithland, then into the country to the home of the late James Wallace Adams.

I had heard that Mr. Adams lived and had lived on the same farm when the Spirit Lake massacre took place, and that he had known Inkpaduta and the warriors who wiped out the settlement here.

Going to see Mr. Adams was an adventure and for once this reporter is going to step out of the robot role reporters play, to tell of a personal adventure. Anyone who is interested in the Spirit Lake massacre and the early days of the Okobojis, will be interested in my adventure.

From the time my little-girl brain first grasped the awfulness of "the massacre" and I got all goose-pimply about it, the thing was something personal, something that remained a little real because I daily walked on ground where the massacre victims walked and saw the same skies and same trees they had seen.

Probably the first Indian I had ever heard about was that of the last century No. 1 gangster whose outlaw band terrorized this part of the nation for many, many years. I probably learned to say and spell Inkpaduta with my blocks.

The story of the Spirit Lake Massacre wasn't just a story to me. Many a night I heard the footsteps of Old Ink's warriors treading softly behind me in the autumn leaves when I was late getting home to supper. Many a night in a blizzard I heard their cruel fingers tearing at the windows.

Howling winds always brought shivers to my spine and I retraced in imagination with Abigail Gardner, when I was 14, through those awful miles of snow and cold with no bonnet, no coat, no shoes, terror-stricken. It made little diffeernce that the young Abigail was even then the old lady whom I went to see every once in awhile, in a little house near the Log Cabin. Inkpaduta and his band often stood guard over my bed when the wind howled and the bed gave way to a tepee on the prairie.

Go with me, then, if you wish, to shake hands with the past, to span the bridge of eighty years to the days when Inkpaduta was not the horrible imagery of a small girl's brain or a memory from a history book, but a living, breathing, coniving, red-headed Indian who lived in a tepee on a little farm in Iowa.

Spanning that gulf of years had been a dream of mine about five years and it was truly a thrill of a lifetime.

It was a beautiful warm autumn afternoon, easy enough to think of Indians lurking behind the shocks of corn, that I drove the thirty miles from Sioux City to Smithland with members of my family. At a drug store I asked the all-important question "Is Mr. Adams still living?" I waited with a skipping pulse for the answer, for I had known he was a very old man.

Yes, he was living. We followed the directions eagerly toward a dream coming true. Two miles into the country, a modern farm home on top of a bluff overlooking the Little Sioux river — and we were at the end of the journey.

A huge dog challenged me at the gate but a smiling woman came to my rescue and cordially invited me to come in. She told me that Mr. Adams was at home, hale and hearty, and always happy to talk about his boyhood and the fateful winter. She took me into a sunny front room where the old man sat engrossed in a radio broadcast of the World Series game.

There he was, sitting in a rocking chair, the man I had come so far to see, the man who could tell me many, many things I wanted so to know — the man who knew so many things never told by history books.

Mrs. M. W. Adams, the smiling daughter-in-law, gave me the proper introduction. My hand was pressed firmly by the old man and I was invited to draw a chair closer to visit about Inkpaduta.

Many of the things he told me had never been written down before, so many of them things of vital interest to people of Dickinson county.

Mr. Adams was very hard of hearing but his mind was clear and visiting with him was a delight. He told me that Inkpaduta and his band came to his father's farm about mid-December, 1856, and remained there until about March 1. History books had given all kinds of stories about that winter and had located the band in Minnesota, Dakota, and near Lost Island lake in Iowa.

They were neighbors of his all that winter, so Mr. Adams was living authority for a statement about where the Inkpaduta band had wintered. Maybe nobody every thought to ask him before,

to write it into a history book. Certainly, travel had been hard and there were many, many people living to tell various things about the events leading to the massacre, when the history books were written.

James and Harry Wallace were hauling water from a hole in the river near their home when their attention was attracted up the river, one mid-December day. They saw a band of Indians approaching and they were, beyond a doubt, the first white persons to see the Indian outlaw and his band in Iowa. Mr. Adams couldn't recall that he or his brother were frightened as they saw the band approaching, nor when they came up to the water hole and spoke to him and his brother. They immediately set about making camp in a nearby woods.

The camp was on the Adams farm, two miles upstream from the little village of Smithland, which had been laid out by O. B. Smith. The Indians lived there all through that cold, terrible, starving winter.

Almost daily the boys met their redskinned neighbors at the waterhole and the squaws frequently visited Mrs. Adams and her daughter at their log house, seeking to exchange bead work and other handcrafts for clothing and food. When weather permitted, the men of the camp went hunting.

"The Indians were quiet and sociable all winter," the old man told me, and his family had no reason to fear them, much less to imagine that within a short time they would become fiends and murder an entire settlement.

The Adams' cattle and horses and the Indians' ponies were all watered at the same hole. Drinking water was drawn from the hole and neither the white family nor the Indians had reason to be suspicious of each other.

History books frequently alluded to some "incident at Smithland" in connection with the massacre. The severe winter was real cause of "the trouble" and also the cause of the Massacre, Mr. Adams believed. That confirmed my own opinion, as I became more and more convinced by reading various history accounts that it was the severe winter that really lay behind the horrible events at the lakes.

He told me the story of the "trouble at Smithland", the true story, not the history-book surmises and interpretations.

When the residents of Smithland, he said, learned that a band of Indians was camping so close, they became alarmed. As the winter wore on and food became scarce for man and beast, residents of the town suspected the Indians of stealing corn from the stores put by for the cattle. At Smithland, they determined to get rid of the red men. About that time, an Indian buck killed a dog for food in the camp along the river.

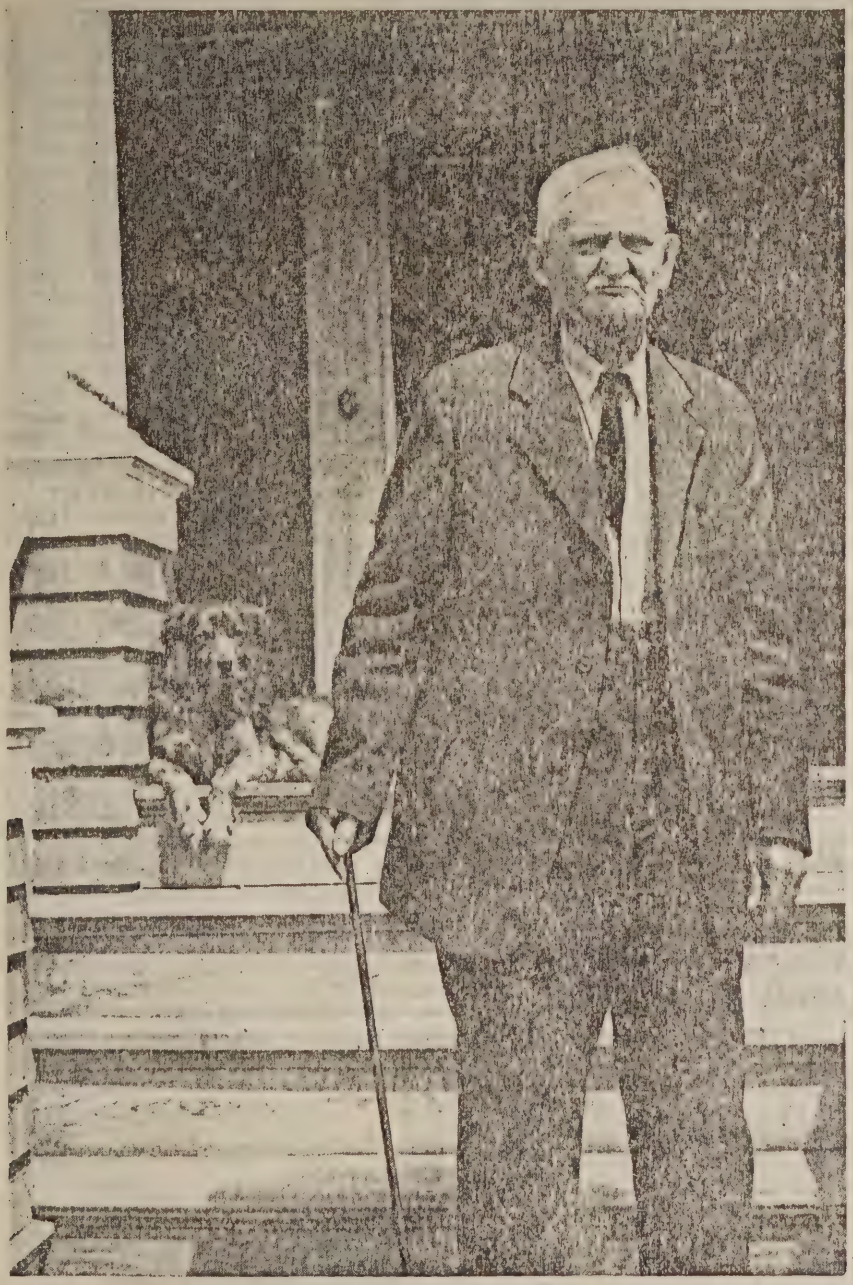
"I suppose they stole a little corn from the cribs, it was a fearful winter," Mr. Adams told me. But he said he did not believe the small thefts of the starving Indians justified the action taken by the men of Smithland.

This is the story Mr. Adams told me and was as far as I know, the first time the true story was ever told for print. One afternoon late in February, a party of fifteen men visited the Inkpaduta camp on the Adams farm. The leader was a man who had recently arrived from Ohio and still wore the military uniform of his service there. The Smithland party demanded that the Indians leave the territory. The Indians probably thought they were soldiers and Inkpaduta was too smart to attack them, so he promised to go away.

"If we have to go, we will go to the Omahas until spring. We can't go up the river now," the Indians replied to the demands of the Smithland men.

To be sure the Indians kept their word and did not sneak down upon the village. The Smithland men collected all of the arms in the Indian camps and told the red men to stop next day, enroute down the river, and the guns would be re-

Remembered Inkpaduta



James Wallace Adams at age 95, Smithland, Iowa.

turned. Mr. Adams told me the names of the men who visited the camp, but I did not remember them. After all, it was of little matter who the men were, after so many years.

"We knew nothing about the fuss and never knew they were gone," Mr. Adams told me, until he and his brother went to the water hole that afternoon and found the camp empty. It was several days later that they learned of the "incident", although Mr. Adams felt the Smithland men should have asked his father about the red neighbors before ordering them out. Had that been done, the massacre might never have happened, the old man believed, for his father would not have approved such drastic measures.

Instead of going south, the Indians went north and their guns were never redeemed. Whether or not they even considered going south is doubtful, Mr. Adams told me. Inkpaduta probably said south and went north to avoid the same kind of ambush he might have pulled off in a similar position. He knew there was safety, without guns, upstream even if there was little means of obtaining food.

Several days after the Indians left, the Adams family first learned why they had moved so suddenly. It was a long time afterward that they learned of the terrible consequence of the move, and still longer before they learned that it was their neighbors of the winter who had massacred the people here.

"I believe the incident was the immediate cause of the massacre, as it made the Indians very hostile," Mr. Adams told me and there was no slight doubt that he was very sincere in the statement I had gone so far to hear.

What a thrill! Reaching back across three-quarters of a century, past the history books to the real source of knowledge — to learn exactly why these lakes were the scene of such carnage. To hear it from the lips of a man who had lived through a portion of the events that made history, it was a thrill, indeed.

Having been 15 years old at the time, and most 15-year-olds are keen minded and curious enough about things to do a lot of personal investigating and learning, James Adams knew a lot about that winter. I deemed his word and keen memory absolutely true, and surely none could come forward to dispute him. As I sat there, drinking in his every word, I felt that none would dare to dispute his honesty.

My next questions were eager — what about Inkpaduta? What was he like, What did he look like? What . . . what . . . what?

"Inkpaduta wasn't near as sociable as the younger ones," the boy James recalled. "He was offish and sullen and kept to himself." He remembered the No. 1. Sioux outlaw as a little under six feet tall, heavy set and powerful, and in the neighborhood of sixty years old. His face was horribly pock-marked and his hair was red. The other Indians, with two exceptions, were all taller than he.

I wanted to know how he knew this particular Indian was Inkpaduta, how he was dressed, what he looked like, what he acted like.

Although he had a marvelous memory, he couldn't bring back their figures plainly enough that afternoon to tell me the details of their dress. As nearly as he could recall, the braves dressed alike. They wore some sort of pants with blankets buckled over them at the waist.

Because boys learn many things without analyzing their knowledge, Mr. Adams could not reach far enough back into his boyhood to tell me how he knew which was Inkpaduta, nor how he and his brother knew he was the chief. They just knew. The same was true of the names of various others in the band. They just knew.

There were 35 persons in the party on the Adams farm, fifteen of them carried guns so that must have meant there were fifteen warriors. There were nine tepees, Mr. Adams remembered very well, indicating five married couples.

A half-breed Charlie, and Gunn, his brother, were in the party. They were very dark and smaller than the others, the old man remembered. They lived a little apart from the others at camp, together. Their wives were sisters who were "tony kind of squaws", Mr. Adams remembered. "They made bead work and moccasins and belts for the women. They often came to our house."

Inkpaduta had his wife and four sons with him at the Adams farm. Three were married, one was single. The twins, Kam-pe-a-ho-to-man (Roaring Cloud) and Mak-pi-op-eta (Fire Cloud) were "fat fellows" and the younger son, then a tall handsome lad of about 17, was surly and sullen and generally ill-tempered. That was something the young James Adams probably noticed more than other things, because he could have been a friend of a likable young Indian lad near his own age, had that lad not been sullen and ill-tempered.

Many years later, Mr. Adams visited the lakes and had a long visit with Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp. It was then he learned that the youngest son of the chief, Thunder Cloud, was the one who shot Mrs. Joseph M. Thatcher as she fought instinctively for her life in the icy waters of the river while others stoned her from the bank. It was Roaring Cloud, one of the "fat fellows" who killed Mrs. Alvin Noble. He was the only one punished for his part in the massacre.

Mr. Adams' memory of the Indians as encamped on his father's farm tallied perfectly with the knowledge of them gained by Mrs. Sharp in her travels with them, Mr. Adams told me.

There was little more the old man could add to the story. He couldn't remember how long it was before they heard of the massacre nor when it was they learned the identity of the killers.

We went to the window overlooking the river and Mr. Adams pointed out to me the exact location of the Indian camp. It was only a mile or so away, worth a visit, but it was growing late and the place had changed so much in the 75 years' time that even I could probably not have conjured up the Indian camp. The Adams log house of 1857, had been just a short way up the road from where he sat.

What, then, of this man James Wallace Adams? His family reached their new Iowa farm June 9, 1856, having come from Kentucky by way of Boone county, Ind., and Rock Island, Ill. They had stopped some twelve or fourteen years at Rock Island. They crossed into Iowa at Davenport May 12, 1856, with a caravan of seven wagons, five of them covered. There were four families in the train with 23 persons. The elder Adams had been in Iowa in 1855 and bought the farm to which he brought his family and it still was, when I visited there, the largest farm in the vicinity.

The pioneer father was a good provider. He builded a new log house and chinked it well before a howling storm bore down upon the Iowa prairies about December 1, 1856. From then on snow piled upon snow until it was about four feet deep on the level.

Other folk had a tough time of it that winter but not the Adams family which had provisions stored ready for the long days. Three wild hogs, left behind by the Mormons, were killed and the meat kept frozen in the attic so the family had fresh meat all winter. They also had milk, butter, and lots of plum and grape jam and jelly — luxuries made by Mrs. Adams and her daughter from wild fruits during the fall.

Mr. Adams, the father, drove 100 head of cattle and some oxen out from Illinois. He broke 100 acres of farm land to provide food for his cattle. A fire, started when a boy set a fire to scare rabbits out of the river bottom, consumed 150 tons of the wild hay and as a result fifty head of cattle died of starvation.

The old man, James, was a little resentful to remember the Smithland action, believing it was too drastic. He pointed out that his father's cattle were dying of starvation within a quarter-mile of the Indian camp and the red men apparently had no thought of killing the cattle although there was near-starvation in the camp.

That winter the snow completely covered the shed where the milk cows, oxen, and family pigs were kept, and it looked

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just like another snowdrift, Mr. Adams remembered. There were six that winter in the white family, Mr. and Mrs. Adams, James, Harry, Elijah, and a daughter. James remained on the homestead.

The Adams family went through an Indian scare after the massacre here. Word was received in Smithland that 400 warriors were enroute there to avenge the "incident" of February. Mr. Adams, the father, was in Monona county working on a bridge so the mother packed provisions and with her family started for there. They met the father, halfway, enroute home. They returned to Onawa for two weeks. Forty residents of the settlement also fled when the Adams' did.

It was a pleasure to visit with the old man, in spite of his deafness. I was told that he had been a substantial and influential citizen in his community since youth and had always aided in worthwhile community projects. His son, M. W. Adams, operated the home farm when I was there. James Wallace Adams had passed his 95th birthday May 21, 1936.

At last, regretfully, I could think of nothing more to ask the old man. I was loaned a negative for a picture as he didn't feel quite up to going outside to pose, that day.

So I bade Mr. Adams a last goodbye, wishing him many more years, although I knew they surely were few in number. There was a certain solemnity in the last handshake and leave-taking. Here I clasped hands with the past across eighty years to yesterday. I was deeply grateful this old man had been spared so many long years, and that I had been accorded the great privilege of talking to him and asking the many, many questions I had always wanted to ask about the beginnings of the massacre. I knew none other was living who could have answered.

Back home, I wrote the story of the interview and it was published widely in newspapers of the day. I was happy, of course, to have brought to my world a first-hand story of the massacre beginnings and of Inkpaduta's band. Yet — it was not just another interview, another story. It was something personal to cherish.

Not long after the stories were published, I had a letter from the old man, thanking me for the way I had written his story, and inviting me to come again. Not long after that — the newspapers brought me the message that the old man was dead.

"Prof. F. I. Herriott . . . ."

True Picture of Inkpaduta Given in Talk To Lakes Group by Dr. Herriott

Prof. F. I. Herriott of Drake university gave much time to the study of the Spirit Lake massacre and related history and had, in 1933, collected considerable valuable material about the life of Inkpaduta. At the time, he planned to one day prepare and publish a narrative, probably to be called "A Triology in Red" to immediately connect the three bloody tragedies of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, in the light of Inkpaduta's generalship.

Professor Herriott died in the fall of 1941, and to my knowledge had never completed and published his triology in red. The last time I had any knowledge of the proposed narrative, he still had a few points he wished to clear up in his own mind before proceeding. It was expected the triology would be published in *The Annals of Iowa,* as his other recent important historical works had been.

However, late in July, 1933, Professor Herriott was a guest and speaker at the annual meeting of the Okoboji Protective association and gave as his address the basic material in his proposed triology.

The newspaper story which was written at the time was approved by Dr. Herriott and since it is so vitally interesting to the Okoboji-Spirit lake region, the entire story follows:

Inkpaduta, the outlaw Indian chief who lead his braves against the unprotected and pitifully helpless group of forty settlers here in March, 1857, was a figure of heroic calibre and one to be pitied. Such was the conclusion drawn by Prof. F. I. Herriott of Drake University in his address "A Triology in Red" before the annual session of the Okoboji Protective association.

During the last several years, Professor Herriott has been making an exhaustive study of the massacre here and has delved deeply into the history of Inkpaduta. His address brought forth much new and hitherto unknown material about the "lawless son of a lawless sire" whose very name struck terror to whites and Indians alike in the north prairie states for a quarter of a century and more.

The subject of the address was to immediately connect the three bloody tragedies of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota, in the light of Inkpaduta's generalship. He compared the tragedy of the chief's life and his history with that of Rohderick Dhu of Scott's "Lady of the Lake" and carried out the simile as he traced the Indian's course to his death.

Professor Herriott spoke first of the massacre here and dwelt briefly upon its unforeseen and frightful devastation. Avoiding the horrors of the attack and all personal mention of settlers involved, he proceeded to show the intimate connections between the three massacres: at the Okoboji lakes in 1857; Minnesota in 1862 when nearly 1,000 persons were murdered within 48 and 60 hours; and the national catastrophe on the Little Big Horn in June, 1876, when General Custer and his entire troop was annihilated.

That the Spirit Lake massacre was not an isolated event, as historians have generally conceded it to be, Professor Herriott gave many illustrations showing it to be very closely connected with other tragic events of this frontier and with previous history of the Sioux.

He first showed that the Indians had cause to resent the white man's invasion of this sacred territory. He stated that the United States had negotiated more than a score of treaties with the Indians, in which the national government had solemnly promised to keep the whites out of the Louisiana purchase, and that every treaty had been broken by the whites.

The bitterness engendered by the conduct of the lawless whites and the perversions of Indian traders and whiskey smugglers or bootleggers had created the utmost contempt for the white man's word among the Sioux.

Although the settlers at the lakes in 1856 and 1857 were innocent of any fault legal or moral in coming to the lake region, the treaties opening this territory to settlement had been gained through tricks and coersion and resulted in an implacable bitterness among the Wahpekute and Mde-Wakanton Sioux that frequented this region.

Professor Herriott traced the course of the events that lead to the massacre here, reviewing the generally-accepted belief that the brutal murder of Sidominadotah and his family by a renegade white, Henry Lott, at Bloody Run in Humboldt county, in January, 1854, caused the dead Indian's brother, Inkpaduta, to wreak vengeance on pioneers here.

That the immediate inciting cause for

the massacre here was an incident at Smithland in the winter of 1857, is the belief of Professor Herriott. As proof of this belief, he offered a portion of a letter written recently by J. Wallace Adams, 92, of Smithland, who was a lad of 15 and living there at the time Inkpaduta and his band were driven out of South Dakota by drought and grasshoppers in the fall of 1856. Adams contends the Indians were friendly and peaceful until Smithland residents became alarmed after an argument about hunting, and disarmed the reds.

Inkpaduta, at that time, Adams remembers vividly, was sullen and seldom seen outside his tent but caused no trouble in the settlement.

The Smithland incident is also given as the immediate cause of the Spirit Lake massacre, according to Professor Herriott, by Mrs. J. T. Waggoner, a Teton Sioux, who is a student of Sioux history.

Professor Herriott avoided repeating any of the narrative which he has published during the past year in the *Annals of Iowa,* concerning the origins, incidents of the relief expedition, and aftermath of the massacre, dwelling particularly upon the career and character of Inkpaduta along the trail of blood and fire, rapine and terror, that lead directly from these shores of Mini-Wakan to the outbreak of the Sioux at Blue Earth, Minn., in August, 1862.

Probably, Professor Herriot said, an attempt to capture Inkpaduta just prior to the Blue Earth outbreak, had much to do with precipitating that horrible holocaust. He quoted national historians who place the blame for that uprising equally upon the shoulders of Little Crow and Inkpaduta.

Tracing the outlaw chief, Professor Herriott quoted from the South Dakota historians Robinson and Deland, who have shown that although Inkpaduta was an outlaw among his Sioux tribesmen in time of peace, he was reckoned by them as among their foremost military leaders in times of war.

Professor Herriott traced Inkpaduta's part in contests with General Sibley and General Sully in wars of 1863 and 1864; referred to the battle of Stone Mountain in 1863 where Major House and the Sixth Iowa Cavalry might have been annihilated had not Inkpaduta held a war dance before attacking, and of the arrival of Sulley's troopers in time to route the Indians; of Inkpaduta's superb ability in his retreat to protect the women and children; of Sully's near-capture of "old Inky" at the Dog's Den in 1864.

He spoke of the wide-spread terror produced by Inkpaduta "who was everywhere from Canada to Nebraska leaving a trail of murders and thefts," after 1862.

Professor Herriott concluded with Inkpaduta's intimate relation to the Battle of the Big Horn when General Custer lost his last battle and his life.

He prefaced the account with the story of the General Belknap scandal in Grant's administration in which Belknap was charged with receiving corrupt money from post-traders in the mid-west for awarding certain parties the contracts. This caused the suspension of General Custer from his command two months before the battle, a fact not generally known, and the speaker intimated this delay in Custer's plans had fatal results.

According to the data presented, Inkpaduta was with Sitting Bull's seven tribes at the grand encampment of the Sioux on the west bank of the Little Big Horn near the junction with the Big Horn, in 1876. Further, that it was Inkpaduta who discovered Reno's troops, aroused the camp and hurled his own Santee and Yankonais following against him, virtually having command at the outset in preventing the junction of Reno and Custer.

Professor Herriott further cited testimony to the effect that this is a tradition among the Sioux that Inkpaduta's sons killed Custer, "Custer was killed by gunfire belched forth from Winchesters held by Inkpaduta's sons." The actual killing has been attributed to Thunder Cloud, supposedly the youngest son of the chief. The speaker also cited a speech on the floor of congress, made by a Montana congressman, that Sitting Bull was with Inkpaduta in the attack on Spirit Lake in 1876.

One of the most interesting portions of the address was in reference to the outlaw chief whom all northwest Iowans have hated by reason of birth in this lake region. That Inkpaduta was "a lawless son of a lawless sire, cruel, bloodthirsty, possessed a ferocious and ungovernable temper and unrelenting hatred of the whites," is agreed upon by whites and Sioux alike, Professor Herriot concedes. He does, however, contend that the tricks in treaty-making were just cause for the hatred.

The failure to punish Inkpaduta undoubtedly made him the bolder, led to other massacres and at the same time made him an heroic chieftan among his own peoples, Professor Herriott said. "And after Little Crows' death, Inkpaduta became the major evil genius of the Sioux."

"Why not, then, more of Inkpaduta in history?" was the question put. And the speaker gave five reasons in answer to his own question: 1. Inkpaduta was an outlaw from the Wahpekute band. Every man's hand among his own were against him. He was in danger of his life in his own lands in all peace times.

2. He was not permitted, because he was an outlaw, to be present or foremost in council fires or any annuity payments. 3. After March 8, 1857, he had a price on his head. 4. He was a military genius. But, because of the price upon his head, his life had to be, of necessity, a hidden and furtive affair. But, in spite of all this, Inkpaduta closed his life in a blaze of glory at the Little Big Horn.

Inkpaduta died in Canada, southwestern Manitoba, an exile after having lived a life, subsequent to 1857, that enthralls the imagination, Professor Herriott declared.

The closing story of the address concerned the grandson of Inkpaduta, who was driven to the shelter of a mission station when starved and frozen, fearing to admit his identity because of his grandsire's part in the "killings at Mini-Wakan" which had, the historian related, taken place thirty years previous and before the lad's birth.

That is the end of the story as it was reported to local papers at the time. Sub-

Peace And Rest

Brown's beach at Terrace park, looking west.

sequently Professor Herriott wrote me about the story, "The account which you give of what I said is decidedly good. But I have one dissent — to wit, the closing words of your first sentence. You say . . . was a figure of heroic calibre and one to be pitied. To the last four words my feelings are otherswise. I did not intend to convey the latter sentiment . . . Inkapudta was of a sort that whatever else you may think or feel of him, pity is not the feeling one has." The letter was dated Aug. 5, 1933.

To this I might reply only that what I meant to convey at the time was that it seemed pitiful that a man who had the apparent leadership and ability of Inkpaduta, should have been forced by circumstances to live the outlaw life he did.

It seems a sad loss to Iowa and the lake region that Professor Herriott never published his findings about the border outlaw. At the time of his address here, he was gathering his data and expected to have a crayon sketch made of Inkpaduta from descriptive material he had, for use with his narrative. That, too, may have been lost to us, unless his heirs can continue with what he started.

"The monument to the . . . ."

Monument Erected, Burial Arranged For Victims By State Legislature

The monument to the victims of the Spirit Lake massacre, which stands on Pillsbury's point on West Okoboji lake, is probably the most familiar object in the Okoboji lake region. It was dedicated July 25, 1895.

The dedication of the monument was one of the most historic and memorable occasions in the lake region, since the massacre. Over 5,000 persons attended, coming by every means of conveyance then known. At that time, a crowd of 5,000 persons was an event, anyplace.

A sum of $5,000 was voted by the Twenty-Fifth General Assembly of Iowa for the erection of a suitable monument to those pioneers who were ruthlessly murdered by Inkpaduta's maurauding Indians. Many of those persons responsible for passage of the measure in the assembly were men who had marched with the relief expedition from Fort Dodge and Webster City as soon as the news of the massacre reached there.

The act provided that a site be chosen near the scene of the tragedy, that the remains of all persons killed be collected and properly re-interred, that a site should be secured and held by the state permanently, and that a suitable monument be erected.

A special commission was named without pay to execute this act. They were named by Gov. Frank D. Jackson, as follows: Hon. C. C. Carpenter, Hon. John F. Duncombe, Hon. R. A. Smith, Hon. Charles Aldrich, all members of the General Assembly, and Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, the only survivor of the massacre then living in Iowa.

Bids were taken by the commission for the monument. Of many appropriate suggestions made, that of the P. N. Peterson company of St. Paul was accepted. The contract called for a shaft 55 feet high above the foundation, of alternate blocks of rough and polished Minnesota granite, with a die six by six feet upon which were to be placed four bronze tablets. The whole was to be topped by a stone shaped to resemble an Indian arrow. The contract price was $4,500.

Monument

Spirit Lake massacre monument and burial ground with Gardner cabin under lattice work in background. Probably 1900.

The inscriptions placed on the tablets are a brief history of the massacre. On the east is a list of the murdered settlers and women taken into captivity. On the west is a complete roster of the relief expedition commanded by Major William

Wiliams. On the south is historical memoranda relating to the losses of the relief expedition and the list of settlers who escaped from Springfield. On the north is the coat of arms of the State of Iowa.

The dedicatory ceremony was of outstanding importance. Many of the state's most prominent citizens were present. Many of the men who marched in the relief expedition were present. Hundreds of citizens in this region and northwest Iowa were here.

Included in the list of prominent persons attending were the names of former Governor C. C. Carpenter, a member of the relief expedition; Judge Hendershott of Ottumwa, one of the first district judges in Iowa; Mrs. I. A. Thomas, a survivor of the Springfield attack; Jared Palmer, who was in the Thomas cabin and helped repulse the attack after he had warned them of the attack here; R. A. Smith, a member of the relief expedition and one of the first to return here to settle;

Charles Aldrich, founder of the Iowa Historical department; Charles E. Flandreau and Chetzenmaza (Iron Hawk), instrumental in returning the two captives to their homes; Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, the only survivor living in Iowa; Lieut.-Gov. Warren S. Dungan; Judge Josiah Given of the Iowa Supreme court; and numerous senators, representatives and other high officials.

Chairman of the day was R. A. Smith of Okoboji. The eulogy to the victims was given by the Rev. John E. Rowen of Clarion, a state senator. He declared the erection of the monument singularly fitting for the band of patriots and heroes who dared all to brave the dangers of settlement in the lake region, finally to fall a sacrifice to their intrepedity and courage.

Many of those who made up the crowd are still living. Many still live in the lake region. The occasion is still a memorable one in the annals of this region. The granite shaft, capped by its arrowhead, continues to point into the clouds in memory of the brave men and their families who dared to be pioneers.

At the base of the monument are buried the remains of the massacre victims, all save Carl Granger and Joel Howe whose remains could not be located. Howe was found in about 1914 by some boys at the newly-established Y.M.C.A. camp and left where he were found. Granger's grave was near his cabin and was believed unintentionally obliterated when the railroad was put through the area where the cabin stood.

The members of the Gardner family had been buried by the soldiers in a small plot east of their cabin home and are still there, the plot marked by a monument of native rock and an iron fence.

Within the shadow of the monument is the only log house remaining of those erected by the earliest pioneers, that of the Rowland Gardner family. Until about 1890, the old cabin housed many a pioneer family, including that of Rev. Samuel Pillsbury, for which the point near the site was named.

In 1891, Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp returned to the lake to make her home and purchased the Gardner cabin from a land company which had platted the entire point. It was then becoming a local ghost house. Mrs. Sharp restored the cabin and lived there for many years until she turned it into a museum to hold her many relics, and built a small cottage nearby.

At the time Mrs. Sharp purchased the historic site that was her frontier home, she arranged to have half of the two lots deeded to the State of Iowa, and the monument was subsequently erected on the south lot. It was her intent that one day the cabin would also become a state shrine.

During her residence at the lakes, until her death in 1921, Mrs. Sharp kept the cabin open as a private museum and for many years personally told her story of the massacre and her captivity. She collected many important relics of Indian days, among which is a kettle carried away from the cabin by a soldier and returned to her many years later, guns carried by members of the relief expedition, and her spoon and moccassins brought from captivity.

After her death, the cabin and its contents passed to her heirs, her grandchildren A. L. Sharp, Jr., and Mrs. Boneta Sharp Wygle. The latter subsequently sold her interest to her brother and he and his family have continued to operate the cabin as a private museum. In the winter of 1941, the cabin and its contents was offered to the State of Iowa for a shrine, under the terms of Mrs. Sharp's will. She had designated the site could not be sold by her heirs unless it was not wanted as a memorial by the State of Iowa or the Daughters of the American Revolution. The General Assembly appropriated money to buy the site, cabin, and contents, for a state memorial. The sale was completed in the summer of 1943.

"A few farmers . . ."

Early Life at Lakes Shown in Valuable Old Letters Written in 1863-64

The few farmers who were around the lakes in 1863 were pleased with the outlook for their crops and had experienced a bad year in 1862. The day of May 12, 1864 was one of those rare ones that lake region folk enjoy in 1946 or any other modern year — warm, the lakes like mirrors, no wind, the wild plums in bloom —

Those things were recently learned about the early days through letters among the family heirlooms of Mrs. Ada Walling of Storm Lake. She has released for use some old letters written from Okoboji, then the only postoffice, by an uncle Aaron Rogers. They were written in 1863 and 64 and reflect a great deal of pioneer life and ways, as well as give new information about the life here.

Aaron Rogers, uncle of Mrs. Walling, was a young man at the time and evidently a bachelor with a keen sense of humor, one may judge from his letters, and much teased because he didn't marry. His younger brother, Henry, came out while he was here and worked for the Rev. J. S. Prescott, one of the founders of the second colony on these lakes.

Henry, then about 17, was drowned in one of the lakes and was one of the first persons buried in the cemetery here, probably in the first cemetery east of what is now Arnolds Park and later moved.

Aaron Rogers lived with Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Osborn and their daughters Sara and Ada. Their home was the log cabin that Rowland Gardner had built for his family. Mrs. Walling remembers that her uncle kept her entranced by the hour with his stories of the early days here, and that he hauled the first mill stones to the lakes from Fort Dodge. He at one time owned a large portion of what is now Arnolds Park, with another man. They sold for $3 per acre, took half the pay in flour. He hated Indian songs and would leave the room when those such as "Red Wing" were sung.

Mr. Rogers never married, having made his home with his sister, Mrs. Walling's mother. He was born Dec. 23, 1840, in Green county, N.Y., and moved to Illinois with his parents when he was 13. Most of his life was spent on the frontier. He had evidently been in the lake region early as Mrs. Walling says he

Pioneer

Aaron Rogers

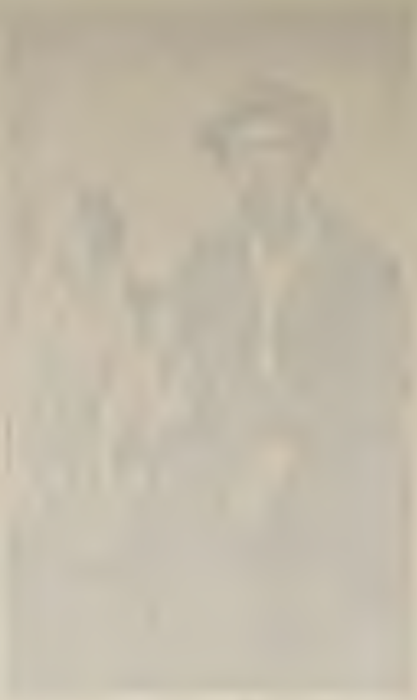
Settler

Rev. J. S. Prescott

Massacre Cabin

Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Osborn and their daughters Sara and Ada lived in the Rowland Gardner log cabin in 1863-64 and perhaps longer. Those women in the picture are probably Mrs. Osborne and a daughter. It is probably one of the most historic pictures in the lake region, a tintype owned by Mrs. Ada Walling of Storm Lake, named for an Osborn girl. Her uncle Aaron Rogers, lived with the family.

These pictures were loaned by Mrs. Ada Walling.



"returned a second time in 1861 to near Spirit Lake." He returned to Illinois in 1867 to be with his mother and sister when his father died. In 1884 he came with his mother, his sister and her husband and baby daughter, to Storm Lake, where he lived until his death, Aug. 11, 1912.

The letters are all addressed to Pecatonica, Ill., the place from which a large number of lakes residents came. He mentions many names that are familiar in frontier history here — Henry Barkman was a prime mover in starting schools. The Rev. Mr. Prescott came to establish a religious college. Mr. Henderson and his sons were interested in boating, and so on.

Mrs. Walling has Indian pipes he had made from red clay of Minnesota and the high red kid leather shoes he wore to the frontier dances, which he mentions. She has the watch that belonged to young Henry Rogers.

The Storm Lake woman is named for Ada Osborn. Her uncle said Mrs. Osborn was supposedly part Indian but was "a wonderful woman."

Since no amount of re-writing can pass on the simple charm of the old letters, Mrs. Walling has consented to their use. All were mailed when the postmaster wrote the name of the town on the envelope and made three pen marks on the stamp to cancel it. They are yellowed, written in ink in the beautiful old style, and the envelopes are small in comparison to modern sizes. The stationary is of exceptional quality.

The letters follow:

Okoboji May 18th, 1863

Dear Cousin. Now take my pen in hand to answer your letter that I received some time ago. I will not give you any escuse for not writing sooner as I have no very reasonable one. Our folks are al as well as usual Father is farming some this year. We are having quite pleasant Weather. We have had a great deal pleasanter spring this year than we had last and I hope farmers will have better luck than they had last year.

"Mr. Prescott arrived with his teams last week but they did not make as big a show as I espected, althou I was glad to see families coming into the place, there has been a good many more gone out than there has come into the place since last fall. There is some escitement almost all of the time here on account of the Indians. I cannot say that I do not feel afraid at all for I do once in awhile feel a little bit scary as they tell about it. When I consider the matter I do not think we will be troubled with the red men yet I can assure you that it is not very pleasant living so. Aaron is sitting in the rocking chair and telling me what to write but I am not very obedient. I told him that I was mad at him for he promised me a boat ride last night and then backed out. Don't you think that is smart of him? I wish you could spend a little time with us. I think it is very pleasant here but I cannot write any more now. Please write soon and I will try to do better in answering it. Good by. (The signature looks like Kate A. Rogers, possibly the wife of Sam.)

Okoboji, June the 7, 1863

Dear Sister, it is with pleasure that I spend a few minutes to converse with you on paper it is a great blessing to know how to write if it is not quite so nice writing as some can do. I am well as ever I was and hope these few cat tracks will find you the same. I have had one letter from you and one from Henry. I was glad to no that you had not forgotten me. I have had but three letters from home since I left. I go to the postoffice every Tuesday expecting to hear from home or from some of the folks there abouts. How is Miron and Mr. Taylor. Is he to work as hard as ever? How is Biron Stotts and Selina. Where is Levi? How is Alden? When did you hear from B. B. Whiting? Where is . . . (not legible) . . . Gideon is here. He is all right. V. E. Osborn and I have great fun fishing and shooting chip munks.

"The weather is cold, the wheat and corn and all crops in general look good. There is not mutch to write about here that would interest you. Say to Henry that I could read his cat tracks very well. When and where is Tom Dick and Harry and every body that I no. Ask Papa why he don't send me some news papers for I don't have any news from the States at all.

"Please write soon. Write every thing that you can think (of) whether good, bad, or indifferent. How does those good Templer stand the test? I hope that none of them have broken the pledge. Henry Barkman has gone to Ill. and will tell you all the news. There is no troble with the Indians as yet. I did expect some trouble with the red devils before this but it is all quiet as yet. If they do come they will not find Norwegians to fight. If you cannot read this, send it back and I will read it for you. If any lady wants to no how I am, give them a quarter of a dolar. This from your Brother Aaron Rogers to his Sister P. J. Rogers."

Okoboji, June the 28, 1863

Dear Sister. It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to inform you that I am well as usual and hope this may find you the same. I haven't had a letter from home in three weeks. I have been to the office every week and came back mad if none of you don't want to write just say so and then you won't be troubled with any letters from me. There is not mutch to write about here. I have got two young eagles. They are very cross. Uncle Sam's folks is all well. There is not mutch sickness here. Mr. Eastman folks is all right.

"Write as soon as you get this. Don't wate untill Sunday for something may turn up so that you cannot write. There is some talk of drafting here. I think if they get me they will have to draft and then if they get me they will have to be smarter than I think they are. I don't want to go.

"This is enough of this. This is all for this time. Excuse all mistakes and bad spelling. This from Aaron to his sister P. J. Rogers.

(And then, to fill out the page) — "Well, Old Parkes, how do you do. Is there any fun down there? How is Angeline Reunion, how is the gun trade, what is the news from the Boys, where is Titue (?), has the Boys been in any battles of late? Does the Young People all of them keep the love of God in there hearts? I fear the most of them have Backslid, have they had a greased board? I have got to write a letter for Mr. Phippin so I will close. This is all for this time. So Good Bye. This from your Brother Aaron Rogers to Henry A. Rogers." (The writer used a great many decorative scrawls evidently to fill out the pages, lots of capital. The punctuation has been added to assist in reading the letters.)

Okoboji March the 22, 1864

Dear Sister. I now take fifteen minutes to inform you that I am amonst the living and hope these few lines may find you the same. Henry arrived here the 17. He is well. He is to work for Prescott. He has not ben away from the House more than 80 rods before To Day. He has gone up town for to get a lode of brick. He came up to Ebs and stayed the first day and night with me. He was rather the worse for wear when he came. They stoped at the Twelve mile lake. Henry got cold about 11 o'clock. He got up and run for some time, then he waked Prescott and they started and come in to camp about 8 o'clock the next morning. This is His first experience in camp life. He will get so that he can sleep on a snow bank before he has ben here one year.

"Lieutenant Blake is here. He was at Pecatonia and stayed at Uncle Curt's. He has the girles photographs. He is a hard chap. He puts on to many aires for a man of his cloth.

"Phebe, how do you get along? You wanted me to let you know my wife's name. It is not worth while at present. Wate until I come back from S. Lake if I go.

"I think of going to Sioux City and driving team for the Sutters. I can get good wages. I shall not start before the first of May. Please write soon. Write all the news. How did our folks like to have Henry come out here? I think I will take Henry with me when I leave here. Please excuse all mistakes

and bad spelling for it is written in a hurry. This is fom your Brother Aaron Rogers to his Sister Phebe Jane Rogers.

"P.S. Please send me some of your favorite flower seed for Mrs. Osborn, also some Sage Seed. Try and not forget it. This will do for this time. Yours as ever. I went to a dance last night. That is what makes my hand tremble. So Direct to Okoboji, Dickinson County, Iowa, in care of my wife.

"Susan Janeton was here toDay. They are selling whiskey. They are going to have a dance next Thursday night and I expect to attend if the lord is willing. Give my love to all enquiring friends. Aaron Rogers."

Okoboji, May the 12, 1864

Absent Sister, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to inform you that I am well and happy as ever, perhaps you think that I keep such bad company that I cannot enjoy myself. I associate with better company than those who talk about me. Henry received a letter from home the other day. He is well He likes his place there to Prescott's and they think everything of him. He is as steady as a Deacon. He goes to parties and . . . . . (not visible) parties, He will come home if I leave here. I think of starting about the middle of June from Sioux City. Uncle Sam has ben quite sick. He is about now.

"Blake is sick. He has gone to Fort Dodge to be doctored.

"You was not far from being rite in what you said. I am clerking for Smith and Blake while they are gone to Fort Dodge. They have a good assortment of Dry goods and Groceries. The store is not more than a rod from Eb's. There is no chance for me to get my photograph taken here as soon as I can I will get it and send it to you. There is an artist coming here in a few days. There is not much news to write. Leattie and Mary is well.

"Write soon, all the news. There is lots of things that would interest me that happens every day. This is enough of this. Write all the news. This from your Brother that keeps bad company to his Sister Phebe Jane Rogers, Aaron Rogers.

The remaining page of paper contains the following: "Okoboji, May the 12. Pleasant Iowa. It is warm to Day. The lake is like a large miror. It is smooth as glass. There is not a brease of wind to trouble the water. The plum Trees are in bloom. The Trees are putting forth their leaves and every thing looks pleasant and more than that I am Happy, Gay and Happy, Still there is not mutch money to be made without Some work. I have not done one months work since I left home for any one I think it is a poor head that cannot support one body without working all of the time. You may think I am an od fellow. The girls say I am the oddest fellow there is in the place. They are more than half rite for I neither intend to marry nor run for office but they elected me constable. But I would not qualify.

"This is to any of you who feel it your Duty to write to one that keeps bad company. . . . . Write soon. I send this by Mr. Henderson. You can ask him what kind of company the Okoboji Boy keeps. Please excuse all mistakes. This from Aaron Rogers to any one as Stated Before."

(The historic picture and letters were loaned to me by Mrs. Walling after this book had begun to take form and I gratefully thank her for allowing me to pass them on to the great fraternity of folks who love the lakes.)

"One summer afternoon . . . ."

Resort, Town, Grew From Small Lakefront Summer Store on Arnold Property

One summer afternoon in 1882, two young girls strung a hammock beneath the trees on the lakefront of West Okoboji, west of the W. B. Arnold home. One was Hattie Arnold, daughter of the home. The other was Ada Lewis, daughter of a contractor working on the Milwaukee railroad then being built through the lake region from the south.

That night at supper, the girls made an announcement that has influenced the lake region ever since. They had decided, they said, that Mr. Arnold's property should be called "Arnold's Park."

History of the land that was Arnold's park goes back to the coming of the first settlers. Three cabins were built during the summer of 1856 on sites now within the corporate limits of the town of Arnolds Park which developed from the Arnold property and ventures.

On the point south, later to become Pillsbury's point, was the last home of the Rowland Gardner family. Their claim was the point and the land at the south.

Near the lakeshore, approximately opposite the present-day Majestic skating rink, was the log house under construction and intended as the home for the Harvey Luce family. It was not yet completed at the time of the massacre and stood as it was for many years. Luce had probably claimed the lakeshore and property W. B. Arnold later bought.

A third claim, on land which now probably comprises much of the east half of Arnolds Park, was made by William Wilson, who later married Eliza Gardner.

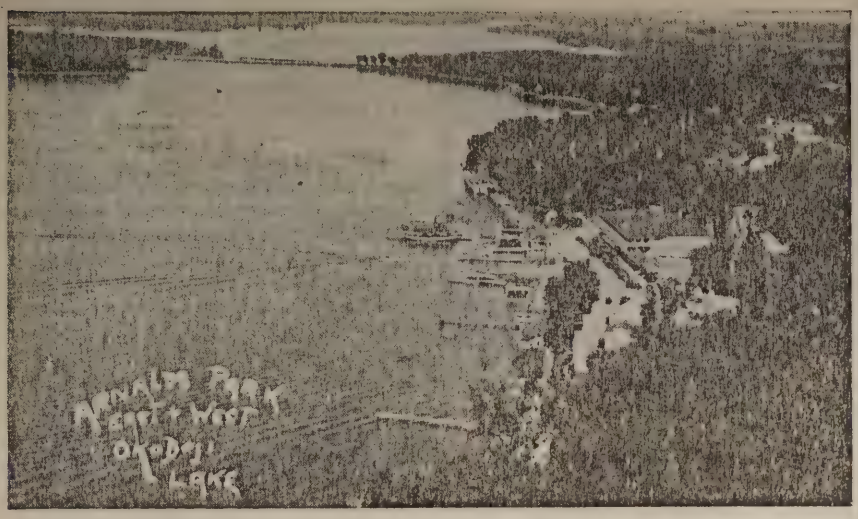
The third cabin was built at the extreme north of the present corporate limits, by James Mattock. His was on the point near where the Okoboji lakes joined and he probably claimed the north half of the grove and land across the lake east.

In May, after the massacre, a group of men came to locate homes. All of

Park Waterfront

Arnolds Park lake front, about 1915. Showing ice cream parlor and souvenir stand at left, Lakeside store and dance pavilian, boat house, and Stevens beach souvenir stand unit, right. Buildings over lake were later ordered removed.

Amusement Park



Air view of the amusement park, with the Okoboji at the dock. Looking northeast, to show the highway and railroad grades, and East Okoboji lake. Picture by Williamz.

the property now within the corporation was purchased by Rev. J. S. Prescott, a Methodist preacher who had come with a big dream of locating a college and cultural center in the lake region. He purchased the Gardner, Luce and Wilson claims from young Wilson and Eliza Gardner for $1,100. Later he paid an additional sum to Abigail Gardner when she returned from captivity.

Prescott encouraged settlement and brought numerous families to this region within the years directly after 1857.

The Prescott residence was on the site occupied for nearly fifty years by the Arnolds Park hotel. His family lived there until the house was burned and then they moved into the Gardner log cabin.

The first winter spent here by the Reverend Prescott was mild and he thought he could foresee great possibilities for the future. He left the large oaks on the lakeshore and cleared away the underbrush from the area between his house and the lake. In the clearing he set out $500 worth of fruit trees, only to have them die when the next severe weather arrived. In those days, too, wild ducks came to that part of the lake "as thick as chickens eating corn" because they were attracted by the acorns and the rushes that grew along the lakeshore.

A barn, said to have been the largest between Sioux City and Blue Earth, Minn., was built on the Prescott home place and another small house was erected on the hill slightly southeast of the burned residence site.

In 1864, Prescott induced Wesley B. Arnold and his brother-in-law, F. A. Blake, to settle here. They then lived in Fredonia, Wis., and purchased the Prescott home place. For a time after their arrival, the family lived in the house on the hill, now the site of the Wood Allen, Jr., home. In the spring of 1865 that house was moved toward the lakeshore to a foundation left when the original home was burned, and the foundation that was for nearly a half-century under the office portion of the Arnolds Park hotel.

In about 1882 or 1883, Mr. Arnold built a new home for his family. It was constructed out of native oak sawed at the mill on the Mattock claim and pine brought from Fort Dodge. In 1882 the residence was moved to a new site a few rods northeast, and the original foundation used for the first unit of the hotel building.

As early as 1874, a large party of tourists visited the lake region. The Billy Wiggins party came from Saint Louis, Mo., with elaborate equipment, a retinue of servants, hunting dogs, and all sorts of impressive paraphanalia for hunting and fishing. Their camp site was near the present Majestic skating rink and the party included from 12 to 15 hunters annually. The Wiggins party was clearly recalled by the late Mrs. Ella Arnold Stevens, who was a girl at the time.

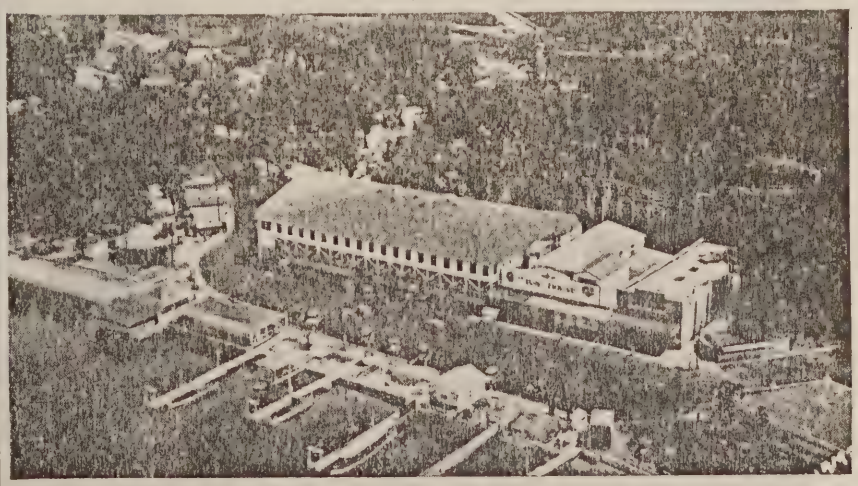
In 1879 or 1880 the Hutchinson family of Des Moines came for a summer holiday and camped on the lakeshore just east of Pillsbury's point. Later Mr. Hutchinson built a cottage there. It was purchased by Judge Josiah Given of the Iowa Supreme court in about 1895 and was said to be the first cottage built on this side of the lake. There were three of the original cottage buildings, all very small, later replaced by large and spacious cottages by Judge Given. They are now the Williams cottages.

Tourist parties came to the lake almost as soon as the log houses were built.

Store

The Lakeside store group, then housing a department store, barber shop and soda fountain, with dance hall at extreme right, before the Roof Garden was built and road straightened by moving the pavilion. Arnolds Park hotel at extreme upper left. About 1918.

Amusement Park



Air view of the amusement park showing the docks, the Thriller roller coaster, and the Roof Garden and group of waterfront buildings, 1929. Picture by Williamz.

They came for several days' fishing and then returned home with wagons and barrels filled with fish. They, in point of accuracy, were probably the first "summer visitors," and came from points within easy driving distance.

When the railroad started north, the influx of tourists began in earnest. Mr. Arnold was one of the first to see the possibilities of a summer resort and made arrangements to open his home as an inn and make accommodations for tenting parties.

In the summer of 1882 Mr. and Mrs. Arnold made room for the men who were building the railroad bridge between the lakes. Mr. Arnold built a small dining room and temporary kitchen on the original Prescott home site foundation, and finished the hotel proper soon after. It stood as it was completde and was used as a hotel until the major portion was torn down in the fall of 1939. The office section was moved to a new location northwest of the site and is now the year-round Turnley hotel.

The Arnold home was occupied by members of the family until death or change of homes left it vacant, was for many years the residence of the hotel manager, and in 1939 was converted into a tearoom and named "The Peacock" by Mrs. Muriel Hanford Turnley, the former "Peacock of Vaudeville". She and her husband, Howard Turnley, had been associated with management of the Roof Garden ballroom and other summer business ventures for some years and had, earlier that year, purchasd the north half of the Arnold lakefront property from D. M. Sterns.

Arnold's

The original Arnold home.

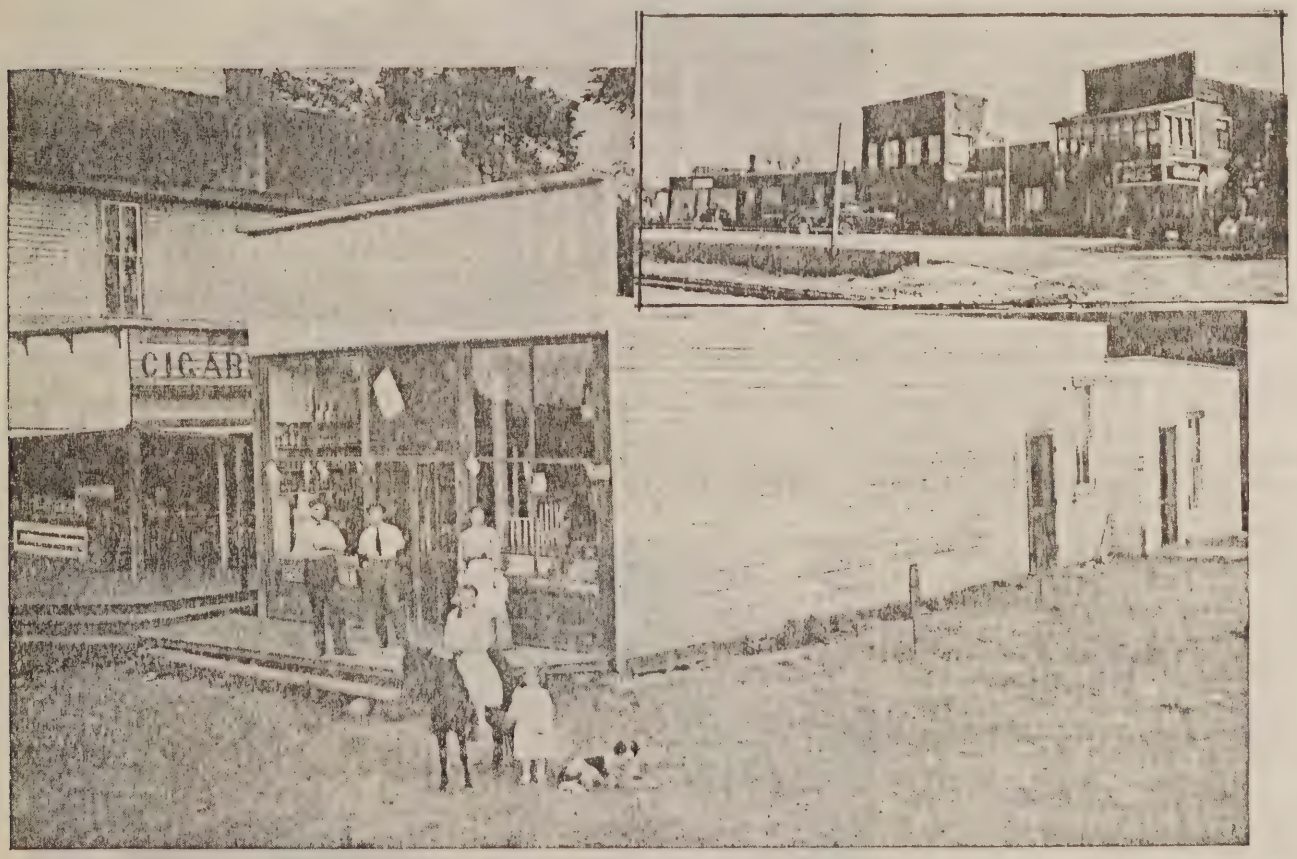
Mr. Arnold was gradually forced to build summer cottages to accommodate hotel guests and had a number of large buildings used as annex rooms. In 1885 he established a summer postoffice at his hotel. It was later moved to a lakefront building that had been an overflow for the hotel converted into a small supply store, entertainment pavilion, and had many uses.

The first stock of souvenir goods was sold in that old store building and consisted of 1,000 souvenir postcards and a few shells and trinkets. A boathouse in connection maintained a large fleet of rowboats for hire to guests.

The store developed into the Lakeside department store which burned early in the new century. It stood on land that is now the road in front of the Lakeside group of buildings.

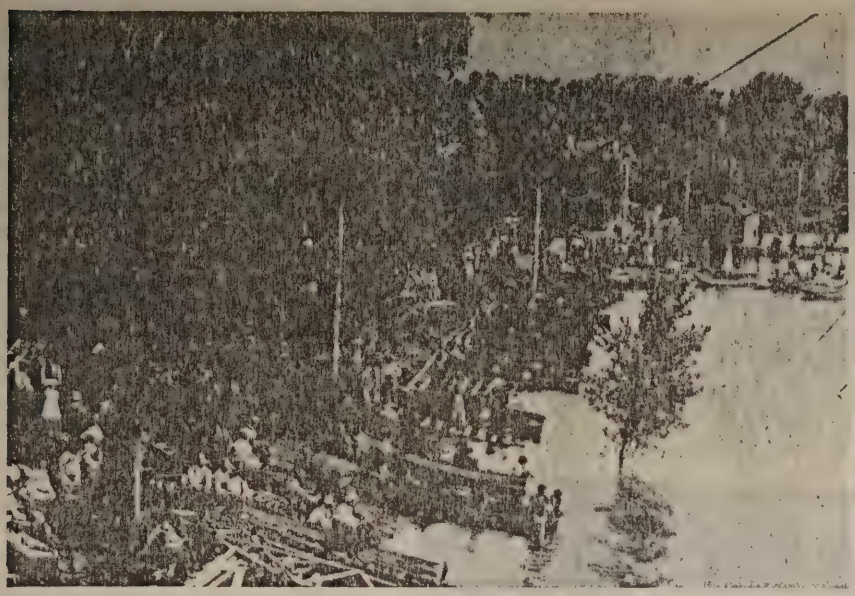
A story of the early days must include mention of that gala period when groups of persons came for holidays, by buckboard, and special celebrations. There were potatoes races, shooting competitions, and swinging in the huge rope swings under the big oaks in front of the hotel. There was swimming, too, when the women wore old calico dresses and long black stockings and the men went raw — around the bend.

Town's Beginning



The original postoffice and store of Arnolds Park town, with adjoining lunch room. Built and first operated by W. B. Arnold. Inset is same location. The original building set on corner location at extreme left of inset picture.

Beach Scene



Sunday lakeshore scene in front of the Arnolds Park hotel, about 1898, looking south.

Bathing Beach

Sunday lakeshore scene in front of Arnolds Park hotel, about 1912, looking north.

Stevens Beach

Stevens' beach, looking toward Pillsbury's point, in its early day.

The excursions, once the lifeblood of this resort, are long since memories. The first year the railroads came through, the terminus was at Okoboji. The south side of the lake was not regarded as a potential town and Okoboji was then given the only consideration, past, present, and future.

When summer tourists in large numbers did begin to visit the Arnold resort, aided by railway advertising of the lake, the company put a summer station-stop near Arnold's park. It consisted of two shed-like buildings and a covered platform. When the town started growing around the Arnold property, the company saw the possibilities and built a depot on the south side of the bridge, less than a mile from the Okoboji station, in 1901.

Excursion trains were run in here on Sundays and holidays from the west, east, and south. Thousands of persons were brought in on these trains, so many in fact that the trains had to be run in sections to accommodate the passengers. The Okoboji station became of less and less importance and after the advent of automobile traffic and decline of railway traffic, it became a station flag stop.

In those excursion days there was very little for the people to do after they got here, except fish and go swimming and picnic. There was no amusement park and only one small refreshment stand where home-made ice cream, candy, and brick popcorn was sold.

The railroad company built a hotel beside the depot, with the dining room and ballroom on the lakeshore behind the hotel. The pavilion was originally the dancing place for hotel guests. With 50 rooms, the place was built in about 1901 and was burned Oct. 6, 1911. In about 1915 the pavilion first came into use as a public dance hall and has now become a part of the huge Central ballroom building. The lower floor, now used in connection with the ballroom, was the dining room. All attempts to make it popular again as a dining room failed, although it is one of the choicest places on the lake for dining.

During the latter part of Mr. Arnold's life, he was associated with his son-in-law, A. O. Stevens, husband of his daughter Ella. They developed the Lakeside store unit, and built a souvenir stand on the lakeshore. The building has since been moved from its place over the water and houses a concession on the street. At the time of Mr. Arnold's death the lakeside group also included the hotel dance pavilion, an ice cream parlor, and a few simple concessions. The small ice cream stand, operated by the late D. J. (Date) Tenant, was one.

Mr. Arnold died Oct. 20, 1905, while at work about his buildings on the lake front. Mrs. Arnold occupied their home until her death in December, 1916.

After Mr. Arnold's death, the family

reached a settlement whereby the late Mrs. Hattie Arnold Sanford, then Mrs. A. L. Peck, retained the amusement park, hotel, and home property. The south half was retained by Mrs. Stevens and her sister, Mrs. Mable Arnold Bardon of Texas.

Immediately after the settlement, Mr. and Mrs. Stevens began development of the south lakeshore property. They built several cottages, a souvenir stand building in 1908, which included a soda fountain, ice cream parlor, lounge rooms and a large public porch, a barber shop and restaurant. It was over the water's edge, and was burned one Sunday afternoon during the summer of 1926.

The Stevens beach area was widely known and popular. Picnics were the rule in the area between their house and the lake, and swimming was popular on that beach. Several buildings were built across a narrow lakeshore road from the souvenier stand and included at various times a popcorn stand, shooting gallery, pantatorium, and the summer photograph gallery of the late "Yankee Photographer", L. F. Williamz, of Spirit Lake.

Ice cream cones came in while the Stevens souvenir stand was new. The new confection, baked while a long line of people waited, and filled with homemade ice cream, developed the small lunch stand into a large area for serving ice cream confections. The cones were made from a batter mixed and baked, usually two at a time by two women, on cone molds. For a time their popularity eclipsed the want of ice cream in dishes.

Pennants of all colors and descriptions, blue and white sailor "middies", and lake and Indian nicknacks formed the bulk of the souvenir business. The Steven's hired their pennants, middies, etc., made by women who worked at the sewing room in the stand building.

C. P. Benit purchased the lakeshore property from the Stevens' in 1918 and the next spring built the large Majestic rink building. At that time there was much speculation as to whether the amusement-bent crowds would support two parks or two skating rinks. After the souvenir stand fire of 1926, Br. Benit built a new arcade building across the road, as there had started some agitation to get all buildings moved away from the water's edge. A concrete seawall was built on the outer edge of the road to provide street parking. From time to time Mr. Benit has added attractions until he has a complete Coney Island to offer the public.

In 1930 Mr. Benit purchased the large Stevens home that had been erected in 1911, and converted it into a rooming house. He now controls almost all of the south half of the Arnold property and in addition to the amusement center has a large group of cottages.

A road, Lake drive, separates the two amusement parks and is the only public

Ballroom

Central ballroom.

Early Hotel

The Okoboji hotel, built by the railroad company near the Arnolds Park depot. Showing one of the excursion crowds. Now the site of the Central ballroom. The original cafe and pavilion connected with the hotel has been incorporated into the Central. The hotel burned. Picture about 1905.

Arnolds Park Crowd

This is a typical scene from the former Arnolds Park hotel to the lakefront on holidays or Sundays. Picture probably about 1918.

Bathing At Park

From the top of the Arnolds Park toboggan, looking south across the Arnold park. The Okoboji is at the dock. Up to 1920.

year-around means of getting to the lake at that point. The state pier is at the end of the road.

While the Stevens half of the Arnold property was being developed, the Peck amusement park developed on the north half of the property by the late Dr. A. L. Peck. He had married Mrs. Hattie Arnold Sanford and set about building up the amusement area. Later he was aided by his son, Earl A. Peck.

The present Dreamland rink started in about 1912 as a summer tent rink and later was housed in a permanent building. A large garage gave way later to the "Dodge 'em" ride and other amusement offerings. The first roller coaster occupied approximately the same site as the one now in operation, but was much smaller.

The Roof Garden, said to be the largest ballroom in Iowa, was built on top of the Lakeside store during the spring of 1923 and replaced the old dance pavilion erected on the lakeshore for hotel dances. The pavilion had served as a moving picture theater when not used for dancing and was made into a "Fun House" after it was moved back to provide roadway. A brick theater building was used for some years and then converted into a "Ghost Train" ride. There are other dozens of entertainment offerings and many small lunch rooms in the area.

The new Lakeside store, built to replace the burned building, was much larger and housed a large department store, restaurant, art needlework shop, barber shop, and ice cream parlor. The years wrought changes and the store was reduced in size and dropped. The large store room was cut up into smaller shops that now house many and varied things for service or entertainment of the summer public.

The Peck share of the Arnold property came under the control of D. M. Sterns of Okoboji, around 1925 or later and considerable of the rebuilding has been done since then. He disposed of the area not devoted to the amusement park in the sale to Mr. and Mrs. Turnley in 1939. They have erected a colony of small cottages, some for year-around use.

In the fall of 1945, Mr. Sterns anounced sale of his amusement park property to Ike L. Lawlor, a club operator, of Sioux Falls, S. Dak. The sale was formally by the Arnolds Park Amusement company to a corporation headed by Mr. Lawlor. Plans were anounced for numerous improvements in the season of 1946

A census taken in the lake region in 1911 by Mr. and Mrs. Steven's sponsorship, is interesting to review. The re-

Arnolds

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Arnold, founders of Arnolds Park, right, with his parents. On porch of the Arnold home.

Benit's Park

Benit's amusement park, showing Majestic rink, and the arcade building with roadway at right along lakeshore. Arcade replaced old souvenir stand, which burned.

Stevens Beach

Steven's beach, looking north, in its early day.

1898 Dock Scene

Arnolds Park dock, showing Sunday crowd about 1898. Behind the famous "Golden Rule" sailboat is the original Arnold lunch room which preceded the Lakeside store building by many years. The only concession then in the park was a small candy store, which may be seen under trees at center, operated by the late D. J. "Date" Tenant. He sold home-made candy and home-made ice cream.

The Central

The Central group of buildings near the depot, showing old ice cream parlor and walk leading to the ballroom. About 1920.

sults showed there were 4,219 persons in cottages and hotels, 530 rowboats, 18 canoes, 35 sailboats, 194 launches, 505 summer cottages, and 20 campers in tents.

A similar survey made by The Spirit Lake Beacon in the summer of 1929 disclosed: 7,916 persons with 2,100 cars and 1,058 boats. The population from the Okoboji bridge south to Maywood, practically the borders of Arnolds Park, was 2,007, no permanent residents included. Around Spirit lake there were 1,330 resorters with 385 cars and 319 boats. Those figures, over week-ends, were swelled considerably. Today it is estimated that some 100,000 persons are to be found within the resort area any large Sunday or holiday week-end.

For many years the Arnold colony was

Hall

First Arnolds Park town hall and jail.

about all there was south of the grade that separated the two Okobojis, except for nearby farm houses. As settlers came in and gradually built homes, the name of Arnold's park was expanded to include the entire south grove. The postoffice was then moved across the railroad tracks from the Arnold hotel and made a year-around postoffice in a little store building with a lunch counter, near the depot. There were then several hundred persons living in the town.

An election was held March 30, 1897 for the purpose of incorporating a town to adopt the name given to the area by the two girls in the summer of 1882—Arnold's Park.

Names of citizens on the petition for an incorporation election recall many memories of the days before the town was here, when citizens still received their mail through the Okoboji postoffice and the town was at Okoboji.

The list of petitioners is as follows:

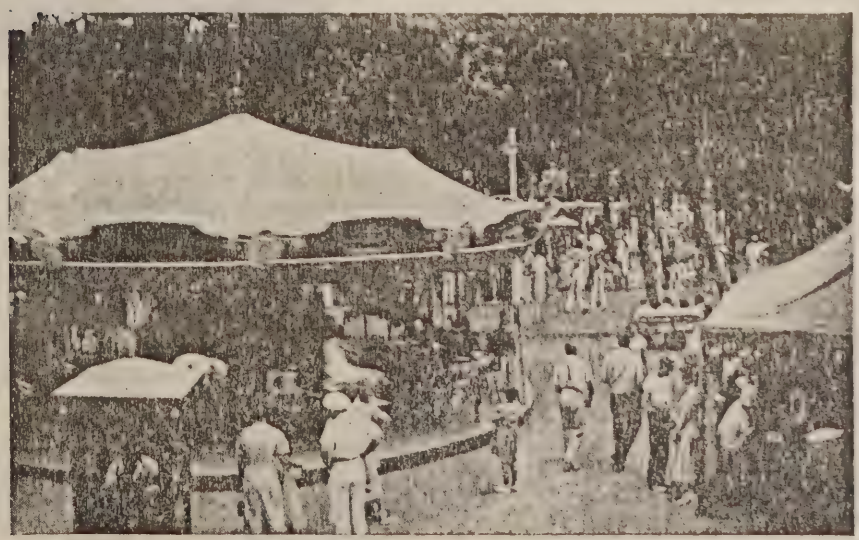
Amusement Park

Arnolds Park amusement park area from Pillsbury's point.

Park Scene

Cars parked near the amusement park on average Sunday, about 1935.

Park Scene



Holiday crowd in amusement park, 1935.

Henry Miguel, John D. Wilson, Elmer W. Inman, George Elston, Henry Kettleson, John D . Hall, J. H. Lewis, James Ackley, E. M. Empey, Ira Dennis, Nick Mercer, John Johnson, M. P. Elston, G. D. Hazzard, J. E. Allen, W. W. Hunnell, Henry B. Abel, John G. Burger, R. H. McInnes, F. B. Lewis, Roy Norcross, Herman Elston, Lucius Allen, E. E. O'-Farrell, D. J. Tennant, Wood Allen, John E. Kay, A. A. Henderson, J. R. Johnson, O. Untiedt, H. Untiedt, J. Christenson, Peter Hanson. Of that number, only four are still living and voting citizens of this community.

Forty-nine votes were cast and fifty ballots, in that first election. Thirty-one voted for incorporation and nineteen, against.

Voters in that first election were: H. B. Abel, George Olson, A. A. Henderson, James Ackley, W. W. Hunnell, C. H. Parker, E. W. Inman, L. Hinshaw, Hans Hansen, M. G. O'Farrell, E. A. Carlton, W. O'Farrell, H. G. Elston, R. H. McInnes, S. C. Hornaday, Henry Miguel, Wood Allen, E. M. Empey, E. E. O'Farrell, M. G. Elston, J. E .Allen, Ira Dennis, W. B. Arnold, John D. Hall, C. Christenson, Elmer Hinshaw, Peter Hansen, B. F. Wiese, J. C. Christenson, C. G. Hall, Fred Lewis, D. J. Tennant, Henry Kettleson, W. H. Bascomb, J. E. Kay, F. W. Gardner, J. G. Burger, E. W. McMillen, J. R. Johnson, Frank Norcross, J. H. Cook, John Johnson, R. McClure, N. B. Hawks, R. D. Mercer, George Hazzard, O. G. Stone, Roy Norcross, and James Crowell. A number of those are still living and still residents here.

Although records are not available, a canvass of the older citizens of Arnolds Park establishes the fact that Wood Allen was the first mayor. Only three of the first five council members are remembered definitely. They were James Ackley, D. J. Tennant, and George Elston. It is possible the others were W. W. Hunnell and W. B. Arnold.

The first council sessions were held in the homes of the members. The mayor received $25 per year and the council members fifty cents per meeting. The population of the new town was 593.

About two years after incorporation, the town hall was erected at a cost of about $25, according to the late Mr. Ackley, who was the contractor. This building rapidly slid into the class of antiques about 1920, and in 1932 was sold to permit widening a dangerous intersection where the side street meets Highway 71, opposite the Okoboji cemetery.

The new municipal building, erected at a cost of $15,000 during the winter of 1931-32, is one of the finest of its kind in the state. It was built on property purchased from the Arnolds Park Consolidated school district and located on the main street from the highway to

the business district. The lot was purchased for $1,200.

Needs of the community for many years to come were anticipated in the new building. It is 45x55 feet in size, two and one-half stories high. The basement floor houses the fire department with runway on the street, and public rest rooms.

The first floor houses the library, town offices and jail cells. The second floor has a large auditorium, stage, and dressing rooms, and is used constantly for public gatherings.

In the past four decades the town has grown constantly. A water and sewer system was authorized by the town council in June, 1921, and was subsequently installed. Bonds, voted for the project, are rapidly being taken up. The last of the sewer bonds were taken up in December, 1931.

Aside from the funds available for building the new municipal structure, accrued over a period of years for the purpose, the library contributed $5,000 and in turn receives the benefit of the three-in-one plan which materially cuts overhead and upkeep for all three city departments.

Town officials when the new building

Arnolds Park

One of the huge burr oak trees in the amusement park, behind the Dreamland rink. Showing The Peacock, and the lake beyond.

Town Hall

Arnolds Park town hall. The building incorporates the town offices, jail, fire department quarters, library, and there is a big auditorium and dressing rooms on the second floor.

Holiday

Holiday crowd on road between Roof Garden building and lakeshore, about 1940.

Arnold's Beach

1990802

Average daily crowd in swimming at Arnolds park beach.

Arnold's Park Hotel

Arnold's Park hotel, looking west. Arnold house at extreme right.

Stevens Beach

Lakeshore drive along Stevens beach, showing souvenir stand unit on waterfront, at right, and Parker's popcorn and news stand, left. About 1920.

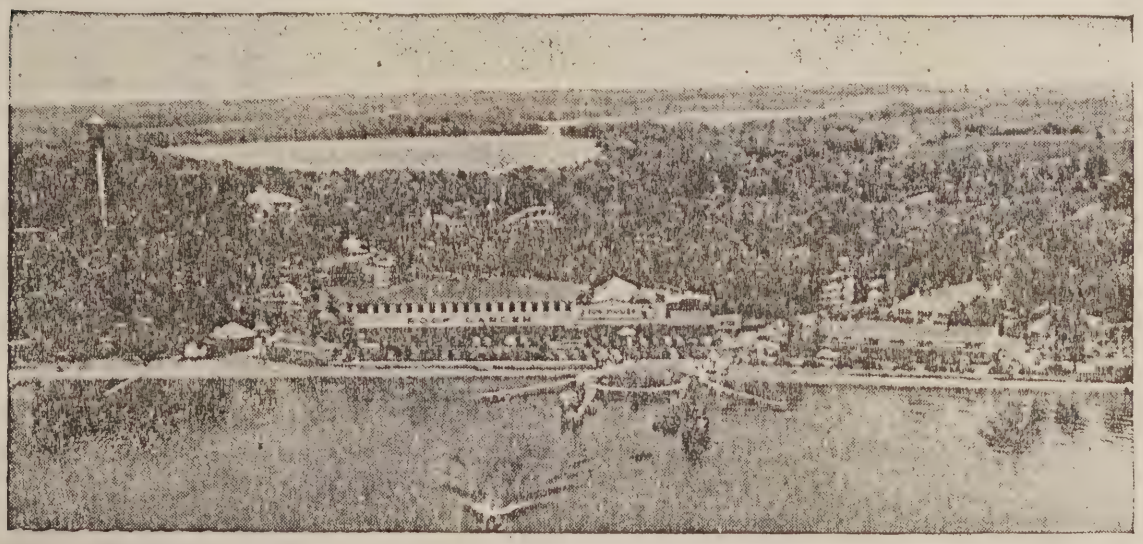
was built were: J. P. Mansmith, mayor; Ray Butler, Earl Miguel, A. G. Wiese, G. E. Rickman, and W. M. Christenson, councilmen; Herman Wiese, clerk; A. L. Groom, treasurer.

During the year 1940 the "horseshoe" bend on the street from the highway to the amusement park, past the business houses of Arnolds Park, was straightened and improved and the street has been black-topped. Other streets in town were also improved. The main street was widened several years ago to accommodate the traffic.

After Mr. Arnold's death, the apostrophe was gradually dropped from the name of the park and the town and it is now Arnolds Park. The population in the 1940 census was 855.

Even the cemetery in Arnolds Park is of interest to summer residents. It was laid out and called the Okoboji cemetery before the town was founded. A great many pioneer families bought lots there. After this area was considerable of a resort area, summer residents also bought lots there and many are buried in the Okoboji cemetery. Funerals have been held in a single week for summer folk "come home" to the lake region from both coasts.

American Legion 1940 Iowa Convention Site



Air view of the lake region to show the amusement park and the town toward the east, used by the American Legion at the time of the 1940 state convention. Lake Minnewastha and Lower Gar in background. Naper photo.

"This is a song of progress . . . ."

Old Iron Pump At Arnold Hotel Brings Memories of Days Long Past

This is a song of progress and the memories of cooling draughts from an old iron pump that served two generations.

The pump stood for many years beside the old Arnolds Park hotel. Many there are now walking on yon side of the hill who stopped to quench their thirst until the pump was no more, to drink there the memories of by-gone days when Wesley Arnold lived in the white house beside the hotel and the amusement park was a place for nature lovers to gather beneath the trees and enjoy the lake breezes — or mayhap watch a sailboat race, have a picnic, or go swimming in bathing suits more voluminous than 1946 tents.

Each summer more persons visited the park and the pump platform became a busy place. Wesley Arnold died, progress swept forward, the old places changed. Always the new crept on but the old pump remained to be surrounded on busy days by an ever-increasing crowd of thirsty children and their elders. The water was sweet and they came back again and again to join the long waiting line.

In more recent years, the young generation found all manner of cooling drinks offered for a dime. Water hydrants were introduced and the thirsty trekked not so often to the pump beside the hotel. Then a water main was placed down the road and across to the pump and a fountain was installed to replace the old iron pump.

Progress marched still ahead and the old hotel was torn down and its foundation overgrown with grass and flowers. Even the fountain was taken away. The old pump remains only a memory of a place and long-gone years and people, of quenching draughts of sweet, cool water, and holidays that are no more.

"The romance that is always . . . ."

There is Lake Romance in Building of Modern Highway from Rock Reef

The romance that is always a part of progress may be found in the most common, every-day places, if one but look for it.

For instance, consider the grade and bridge that separates East and West Okoboji lakes and connects Arnolds Park and Okoboji, over which hundreds of persons ride daily on United States Highway 71. Was it always that way? Is it a natural passageway for men? Has it been improved with the passing years? Is it a natural link between the two lakes?

When the earliest settlers came in July, 1856, they found a point of land reaching between the lakes to form a natural separation. On the east was the lake now known as East Okoboji, long and narrow, and on the west was the lake now known as West Okoboji, wide and deep and clear.

The late R. A. Smith, Dickinson county historian, one of the first to return to the lakes after the massacre, recalls in his history that there was a point of land jutting out into the lake, a natural barrier separating the two waters. It was three to four rods wide and had a growth of bushes and trees, "some of which showed evidence of being forty to fifty years old."

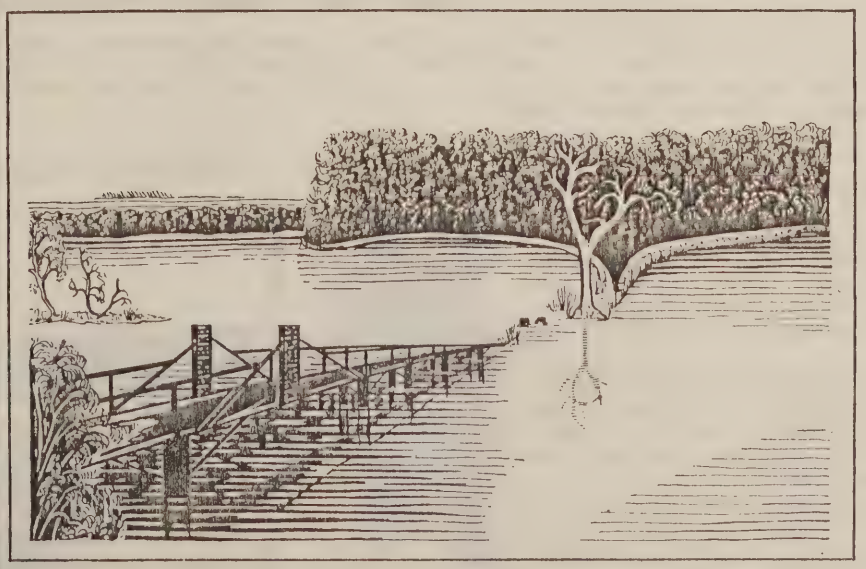
Today there runs the length of the sand barrier a paved highway and a permanent concrete bridge spans the narrow passage between the lakes.

So — there must be a history to this narrow strip of land. The earliest settlers forded the narrow channel, because to avoid it meant traveling around one or the other of the lakes to reach a point north or south of the narrow strait. In the early days, wagon boxes were floated across and pulled by oxen, the method pioneers learned in fording the streams on their way to the wilderness.

The first bridge there was authorized by the first board of superpisors of the new Dickinson county. In the court record of Dec. 19, 1859, a contract is shown concerning the building of the bridge.

The contract reads: "one across Lake Okoboji at the narrows east of Spirit Lake and one across the straits which

Grade — Early

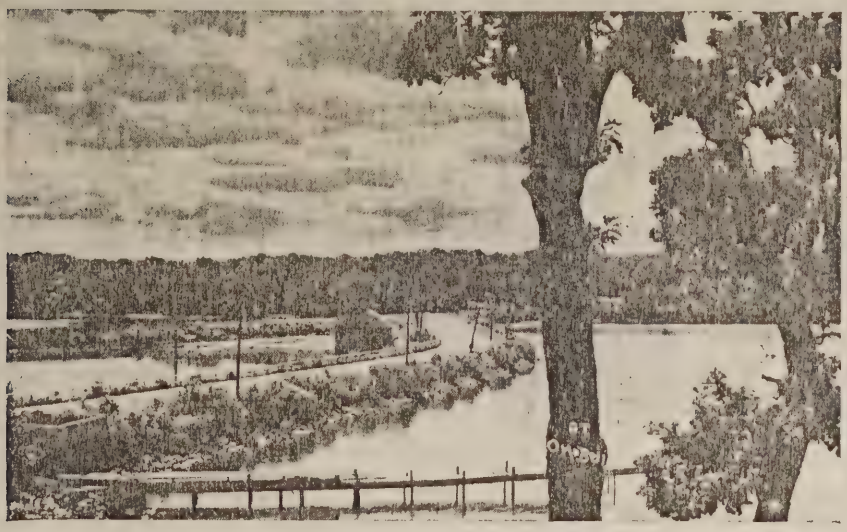


The first bridge, over the Okoboji grade. Looking south. From an old drawing by an early-day painter, by Miss Mable Henderson.

Early Road

The Okoboji grade with its familiar wooden railing, early in the 1900's. Boathouse shows through railings at center. Looking south.

Grade Before Paving



The improved gravel road with a substantial fill, trees cut away and no paths down to the lake to water the horses. The road is now a highway. Familiar boat storage shed still may be seen. About 1910-1930.

New Bridge, Pavement

The grade has now become a modern paved highway. Looking south.

connect East and West Okoboji lakes, such bridges to be sixteen feet wide with undersills and bents, the middle span to be thirty feet long and the other spans not more than sixteen feet long, double braced below, and single braced above with a good substantial railing, said bridge to be planked with two-inch oak plank and built in a substantial and workmanlike manner.''

Payment for these bridges, one to cross the Little Sioux river, ''where the road crosses from Spirit Lake to Sioux City'', and the first county courthouse, was to be some 5,000 acres of swamp land to be designated by the committee in accordance with the Act of Congress, of Sept. 28, 1850.

The contract further stated that the builders, Alford D. Arthur and John D. Howe, agreed not to let any of the work to non-residents. Deeds to the swamp land were to be executed upon ratification of the contract. Loennidas Congleton, county judge, signed the contract. The work was to be completed by Jan. 1, 1861.

An entry of June 12, 1866, shows that trouble had arisen over swamp land titles and that meantime the courthouse had been constructed and taken over by the government as a barracks. As assignee, Henry Barkman, accepted final settlement from the board of supervisors.

Smith's history relates that the first Okoboji bridge was 210 feet long with the main span thirty feet in the clear. It was ''strongly trussed with heavy braces, king posts, and needle beams. It was built by John Loomis on contract from Howe and Arthur.''

The Dickinson county history states that the bridge was rebuilt four times up to 1900. In 1874 or 1875, the trestle was taken out on each side of the main channel and the log cribs were filled with rocks to hold the bridge in place. When the work was completed, the bridge was four feet above the water. The rise during that spring was so rapid that in July the water was dashing against the bridge.

Soon after rebuilding of the bridge, there came an agitation for navigation between the lakes. L. W. Waugh proposed a light and strong bridge be built so that it could be raised by block and tackle to permit passage of boats from West into East Okoboji lake. The board of supervisors allowed Waugh to try his plan.

The new bridge was built on the old piers. A derrick was erected and the necessary ropes and pulleys were provided. The bridge was raised only once or twice and the scheme was abandoned. It didn't work. The bridge was used, without raising until 1883.

Meantime, in 1872 and 1873, the lakes had risen enough to wash over the natural bar between them and an artifical fill was necessary in order to maintain

that avenue of travel. About four feet of fill was necessary.

The first swing bridge was built in 1883 on the old piles. That bridge was rebuilt with concrete piles, probably in the spring of 1898.

Records concerning early bridges cannot be located in the courthouse, possibly because the records were destroyed in a fire that once destroyed the building. In the minutes of the board of supervisors, dated June 11, 1897, it is stated that S. L. Pillsbury and O. S. Jones had been appointed a committee to let contracts for swinging bridges at Spirit Lake and Okoboji. The next entry concerning the bridge is of Nov. 10, 1897, in which it is stated that O. S. Jones and P. Rasmussen were appointed a committee to rebuild the swing bridges at Spirit Lake and Okoboji. The entry of Jan. 7, 1898, includes a contract with the W. W. Wheeler Lumber and Bridge company of Des Moines, for the purchase of materials for bridges in Dickinson county. There is no contract in the record showing the date or price of the second swinging bridge. It was, however, a wooden one.

In connection with this bridge, many of the older residents recall the warning that was painted on a board at the top of the center post. It read: "$5 fine for riding or driving across this bridge faster than a walk." The high-spirited horses were carefully held to a walk as they crossed the bridge!

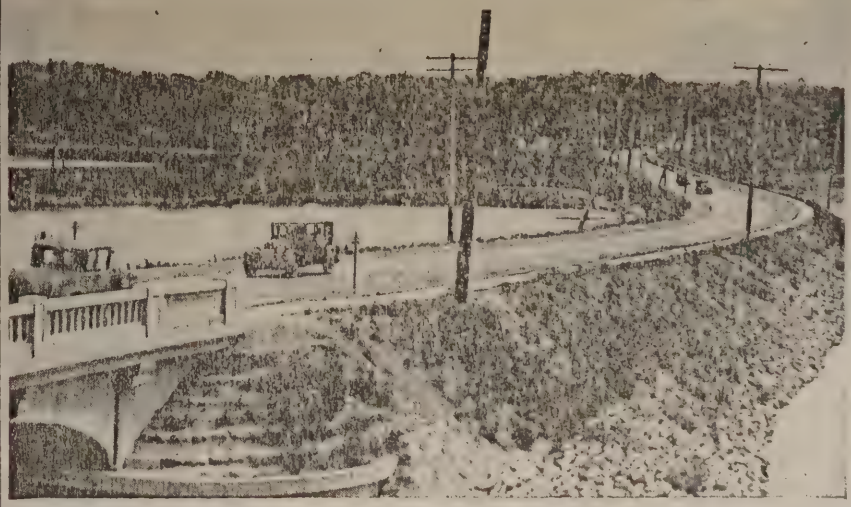
It was only ten years until a new bridge was needed at the strategic point between the lakes. The records of the board of supervisors, June 15, 1909, states: "The board investigated the condition of the Okoboji swing bridge and after due consideration ordered a new steel bridge from the Clinton Bridge and Iron Works for that place to be in position within ninety days. Consideration was $1,550."

During the period when the steel bridge was being placed, the first automobiles were in use in Dickinson county. It was necessary to go either around East Okoboji to get to Spirit Lake, or drive around West Okoboji to get there.

Several persons drove their automobiles across the railroad bridge to shorten their drives to and from the county seat. The late Fred Jones, then sheriff, related that he was the first person who drove across the new steel span. He arrived at the place one afternoon and workmen planked the new steel beams to permit the sheriff to hurry on his way.

The last chapter of the bridge story was writen in 1929. A concrete bridge costing $17,389.20 was built across the channel with a box culvert built on the north to carry away water from the hill above, at a cost of $1,007.44. Additional fills were needed then at the approaches of the bridge, enough so that the Oko-

Grade — 1930



The grade is further improved and now has a sidewalk for pedestrians. The concrete bridge has been built, extreme right. About 1930. Looking south.

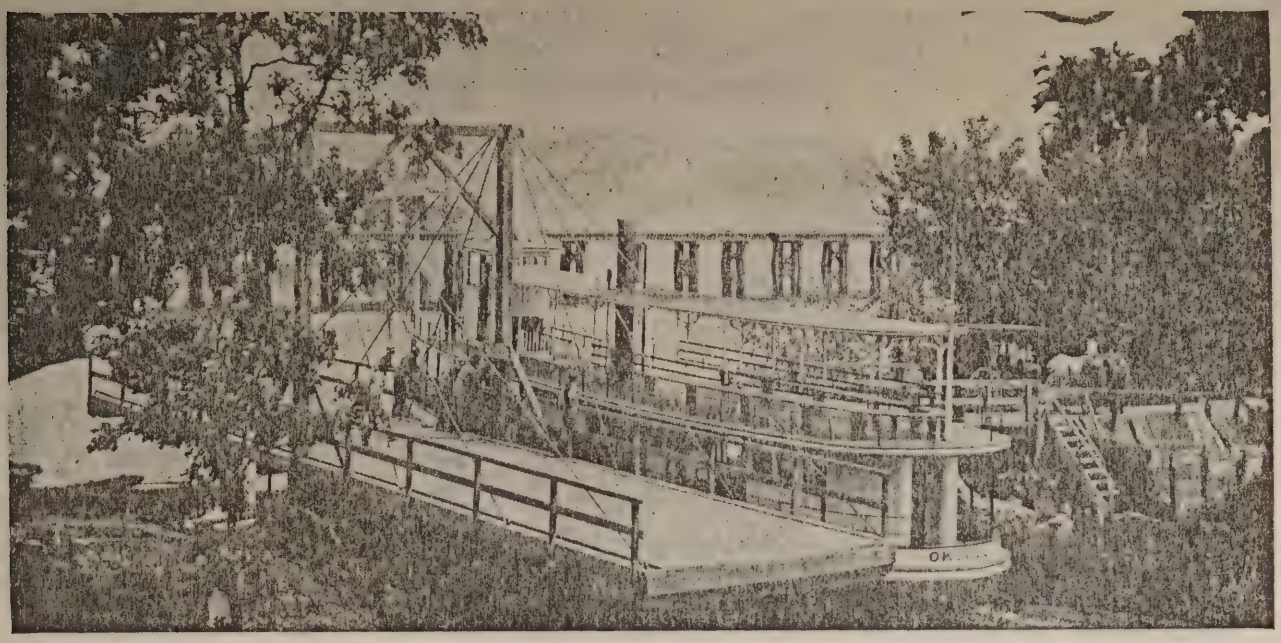
Winter At Okoboji

Winter scene at one of the first Okoboji bridges. Showing railroad train crossing the trestle in background.

New Bridge, Pavement

This is Okoboji. The store and postoffice at left, ice cream store and fish market at right. Shows concrete bridge, and railway grade and bridge in center. Looking south, 1941.

Swing Bridge



The Okoboji going through the swingbridge at Okoboji. Heading toward the railroad bridge, which was also swung. Men were on duty all season to swing the bridges. To ride on the bridge while it was swinging was a favorite pastime for the children.

boji store had to be raised to the level of the highway.

In the summer of 1930, the Iowa State Highway Commission made an additional fill of the grade at the south, and the stretch between the lakes was paved when Highway 71 was paved from north to south through the county. In 1931 an additional rock fill was made on the grade and a sidewalk constructed for pedestrians. The cost was $4,500.

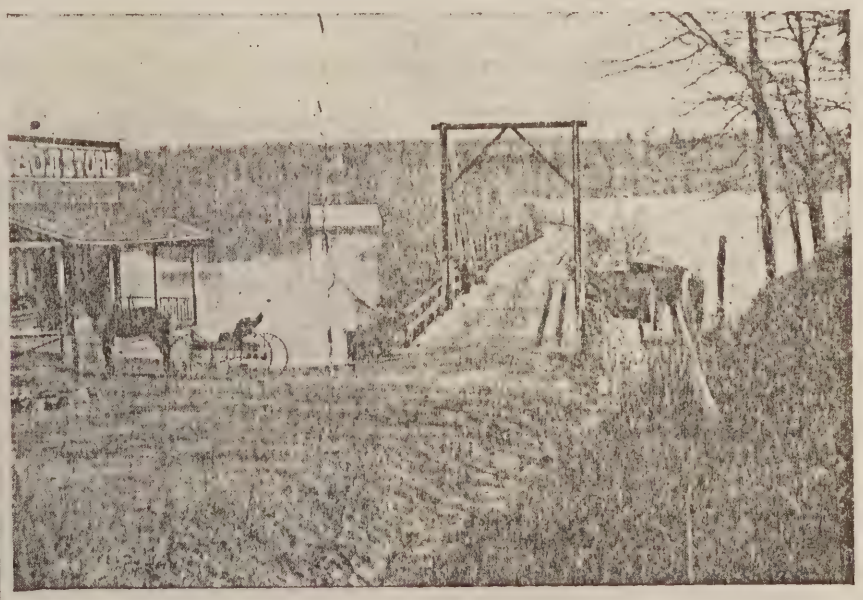
Total cost of preserving that small strip of land is beyond estimating, because the fills were made many times with sand and gravel to maintain a road. The sides have also been rip-rapped with rock and cribbing. Approaches to the bridge were filled many times.

The Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul railroad was built into the county in 1882 and that summer was occupied with building the right-of-way to the lakes. A crew was brought here to build the long trestle that crossed the lake at the south end of the natural roadway, and through the years the trestle has been rebuilt a time or two. A swinging span was added when navigation from lake to lake was begun, and may still be swung. Since erection of the concrete bridge at the grade, there is no occasion for swinging the railroad span.

It was at the south end of the grade that the James Mattock cabin stood and where that family and the youths from the Granger cabin were killed in the massacre. The site of the cabin is marked now by a D.A.R. plaque. The highway runs almost across the site. The railroad tracks run through the site of the Granger cabin on the point at the north of the grade.

The bridge in Spirit Lake across the upper end of East Okoboji lake had a similar history. It, too, had a swing bridge for mnay years to permit the steamboats to go to Orleans and back on regular passenger runs. That bridge has now been replaced with a concrete span and the roadway has been filled and improved. Highways 71 and 9 now cross there east and west through the county, and the highway is paved.

Early Bridge



One of the earliest wagon bridges over the Okoboji narrows and road along the bridge. At left is the original Okoboji store. Building in lake at center is a boat storage house.

"Okoboji is the oldest town . . . ."

Town of Okoboji Site Chosen For Spirit Lake By Earliest Settlers

Okoboji is the oldest town of five that touch on the Okoboji lakes, yet it was not a town until 1922. It has many things to set it apart from other towns, including its name.

In July, 1856, a party of Red Wing, Minn., youths came to these lakes. After several days of exploration, they chose the Okoboji site for a town they proposed to found, and called it Spirit Lake. They knew, however, when they did so, that their town was not on the banks of the lake by that name. Evidently, they thought their site was more beautiful. They built a cabin overlooking the lakes, probably toward the east or southeast, and Dr. Isaac H. Harriott claimed the land at the west on the west lake.

James Mattock of Delaware county, who accompanied them from Sioux City, claimed the grove south across the narrow straight that separated the two lakes. He built a cabin there. Soon other families came and built cabins in the groves here and there about the lakes. They were all murdered.

Three parties of settlers came in from Fort Dodge and Newton, arriving May 8, 1857. The Granger cabin and claim was much desired by the new arrivals — for they, too, thought it the most desirable. But William Granger, a member of the Red Wing company who escaped the massacre by his absence on a trip to bring in provisions, held onto the claim. He did not give it up for settlement until 1859.

The settlement in the groves at the meeting of the lakes became known as Okoboji and in 1859, only a year after the establishment of a postoffice at the new townsite of Spirit Lake, a second postoffice was established at Okoboji. G. H. Bush was the first postmaster, Mail came semi-monthly from Mankato and Sioux City and as was then customary the mail was kept at the postmaster's house, and sometimes carried around in his hat.

Strangely enough, Okoboji has never had a schoolhouse. The first school in this section was held in the original Harvey Luce cabin and Miss Myra Smith of Okoboji was the teacher. School was later held in the Gardner cabin. Children from Okoboji have always had to go at least a mile to school. When the Center school, later known as the Center Grove school, was established a mile or so north of the straits, the children went there, having previously gone to school northwest of there and to the school in Arnolds Park.

The Center Grove school was abandoned when the district was consolidated with the Arnolds Park district in 1914 and Okoboji children attend school at the big school. The enter Grove school site is a residence, opposite the airport.

The excitement of the railroads coming to northwest Iowa gripped this settlement early in the 80's. The first train of cars crossed the southern Dickinson county border Aug. 1, 1882. While the track was being built further north toward Spirit Lake, the work trains used the track as it was laid. For a time, the terminus was near the present Allen crossing in Arnolds Park.

Old-timers relate that Okoboji was the terminus of the Des Moines-Spirit Lake branch for some years and that the spur is still in place at the Okoboji depot. The station stop was called "Okoboji Lakes" and still is.

The railway station was built there

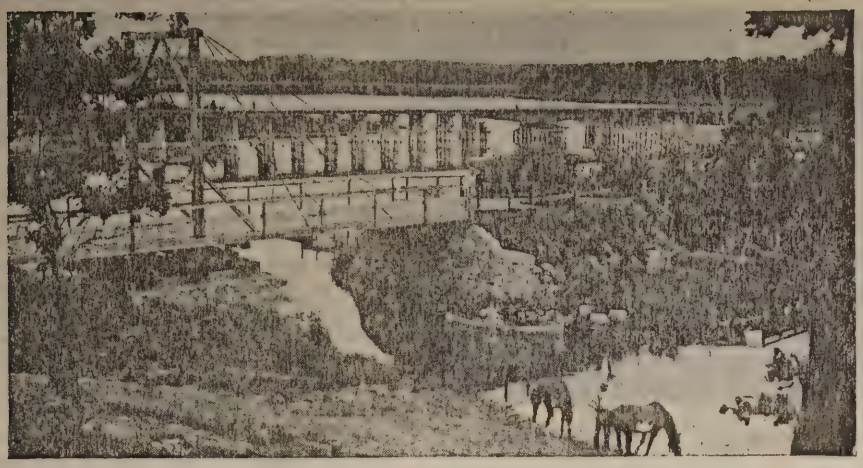
Town Hall

Okoboji town hall.

Lake Path

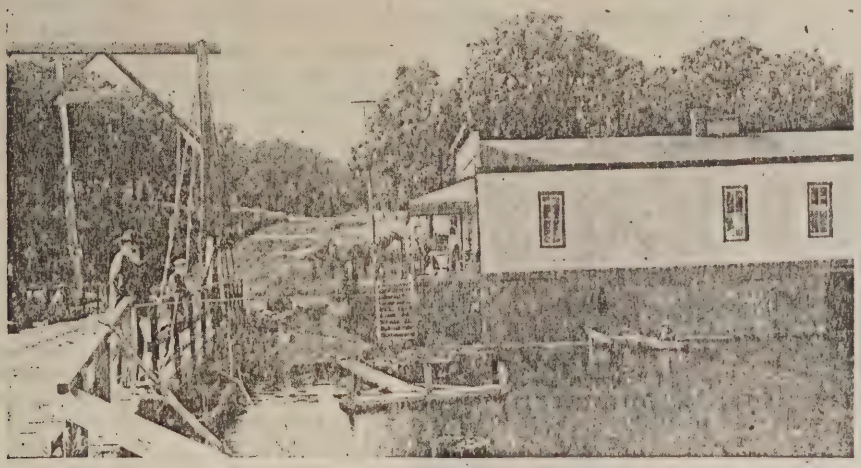
The Okoboji "main drag"—the pathway along the lake. This picture looks southwest, with McHenry's point, and the Arnolds Park water tower in the distance. Point is also called Givens'.

Early Bridge



One of the early swing bridges, with railroad swing bridge in background. Looking southeast. About 1895.

Early Okoboji



All there was of Okoboji in the early 1900's. This picture was taken in 1909 to show the extreme height of the water. Notice it comes to the threshold of the boat livery door. This was a swing bridge. Picture looks north.

Good Sailing

The start of an Okoboji Yacht club race, off Fort Dodge point, 1935.

and it was not until well into the new century that the Arnold's Park station became more important than a flag stop. Business was all conducted at Okoboji and there was only a loading platform and shed office at the south end of the grade. Gradually, as the town built up around W. B. Arnold's summer resort, the Arnolds Park station became more important, until the Okoboji station became the flag stop.

The railroad also brought great visions of summer resort projects. During the boom, a project was laid out on Dixon's beach, the original Harriott claim, but was abandoned when the chief promoter died.

Okoboji has been largely the center of the boating industry in the Okoboji lake region. The larger boat houses and steamboat docks have always been there. The largest steamers ever to ply the lakes were built at Okoboji. The large "Ben Lennox" and several others were built on forms erected along the bank between the Okoboji store and the railroad bridge, and launched sideways.

The fine old flagship "Okoboji" was built on Given's point and launched there, as were the "Des Moines" and "Sioux City", with great ceremonies to start their careers.

There are now two large boat works in Okoboji, which serve hundreds of patrons, and service and store hundreds of boats during the summer and winter. Some of the finest rowboats on the lake are built there, and everything for boats and boating is available.

The Wilson Boat Works, on the point just east of the railroad bridge, is now operated by the third generation. It was established by S. E. Mills in the rear of his store and postoffice building at the channel, and sold by him to W. S. Wilson in 1888 when that pioneer took over as postmaster and store keeper. From the back end of the shop, the boat works was moved to a larger building. Mr. Wilson's son, Edd, took over the works although his brothers aided at times, and now the grandson, Fred, is owner and operator of a greatly enlarged plant that occupies four large buildings.

The Okoboji store, operated by W. S. Wilson & Sons, for many years, was built originally for a skating rink by a young Norwegian man, Louis Kellsen. He thought he would make a fortune and got Mr. Mills to erect the building. Mills was to have a boat house in the basement. The skating craze collapsed about the time the building was ready, and Kellsen sold to Mills. The latter moved the postoffice and store into the front room and used the back room for storing and painting boats.

The store was sold to Tom Olson in 1920 and he sold to S. A. Nelson in 1943. It changed hands several times between the time Wilsons sold their holding until present ownership. Olson still operates

the boat house in connection with the store, as it has been operated for many decades. The bay between the bridges, and Smith's bay on the west, and the East Okoboji bay on the east are all good fishing areas and the location of the boathouse has always been a good place for steady trade. Harry Wilson, brother of Fred, operates the boathouse for Olson.

Another interesting fact is that Okoboji has never had a church. The first religious service was held at the Gardner log cabin in 1857 and attended by R. A. Smith whose home was in Okoboji until his death. Methodist circuit riders made regular trips through the lake region, but the first established church was the Friends' in Arnolds Park. Until about 1923 there was no other church in the region to attend, and everyone who went to church went to the little white Friends' meeting house. With establishment of the Methodist church in Arnolds Park, those favoring that congregation severed connections with the Friends church. Okoboji people, generally, attend one or the other regularly.

Okoboji was incorporated in August, 1921, after an election held for that purpose on March 30, 1922, was called illegal. In 1924 the town took in an additional area of land. The incorporation now goes north to include Brooks' beach on East Okoboji, and all of the territory on West Okoboji up to and including most of Fair Oaks beach north of Hayward's bay. The area includes what is commonly known as the "gold coast" along Des Moines and Dixons' beaches and north, where many wealthy families maintain summer homes. It also includes The Inn hotel.

Clinton G. Murray was the first mayor of Okoboji with E. F. Miller, Edd F. Wilson, Roy C. Roff, Tom Olson, and A. G. Anderson on the council. Roy Smith was clerk and George Arp treasurer.

Population of the town is around 200 but the summer population is in the thousands, and it is a town without a business center except the several buildings to care for year-around needs. The two stores are three blocks apart. One closed during the war. There is now a year-around cafe, and summer ice cream store and fish market. The postoffice remains, as it was almost in the beginning, in the corner of the store at the bridge.

Okoboji has no fraternal orders or social organizations, although a sportsmans' group has headquarters there. Residents of Okoboji belong to fraternal and social orders in Arnolds Park, Spirit Lake, and Milford. Okoboji has no movie or other amusement center and no year-around filling station except the pump at the store.

Along with all of the "have nots" of Okoboji — it has no cemetery but shares the Okoboji cemetery at Arnolds

Smith's House

The familiar M. J. Smith home in Okoboji dominates that area from the high hill overlooking the lake. It was built in 1873. It's framework is of native sawed oak, the finishing lumber was hauled from Algona. The Smith family lived in the cellar while the plastering and finishing work was done. The home had, until then, been on Fort Dodge point. The west wing, in this picture, was added in about 1882, so Mrs. Smith could provide meals for the men who brought in the railroad, and for summer visitors. The house was very widely known for its hospitality. M. J. Smith was a brother of R. A. Smith, who came with the relief expedition and was author of the county's history to 1900. He came here in 1858.

Smith's House

The Smith house on the hill at Okoboji, as it looks today.

A Close Race

A close race, about 1935.

Park with residents there just as the townsfolk of Okoboji have always shared in public and private affairs with their neighbors at the south. Many of them, on both sides of the grade, still remember when it was one community and the only postoffice and store were on the north side.

During the last several years, Okoboji has installed and put into working order a huge sanitary sewer and water system, one of the finest marks of progress since the arrival of the first settlers. The system was built by co-operation of federal and state agencies and with hearty approval of cottagers along the miles of Okoboji waterfront.

It was not until as late as the early 20's, that the rest of Iowa knew there was another town at the lakes, Okoboji was so firmly established by then. Many present-day residents recall arriving here on a late train to have the conductor all but refuse to let them off at the Arnolds Park station in the night.

And what of Okoboji — the name? Strangely enough, once more, nobody knows what Okoboji means or where the word came from. Yet it is a word common throughout the midwest and the nation — and always means Okoboji, the little town with so many "have nots", and the lake that is known the world around.

Early Okoboji

Okoboji in 1898 — there was a barber shop, postoffice and store. Note, also, the bridge and grade.

Lake Path

Another view of the Okoboji main artery of travel — the foot path along the lake. This picture looks toward the bridge and stores, east.

Coal Dock

Okoboji from the grade, looking north, showing the early fleet of steamboats at the coal dock, the Smith cottages and homes on the hill, the wagon bridge, and the Wilson & Sons general store. The large boat is the Ben Lennox.

"In spite of what every . . . ."

White Men Brought Navigation to Lakes; Found No Indian Canoes Here

In spite of what every school child knows, that Indians all had canoes, white men brought navigation to the Okoboji lakes and Spirit lake. It seems especially odd, when it is remembered that this lake region was supposedly the regular rendevzous of Indians of many nations, and that the lakes are so formed that comparatively near-by places were miles around by the footpath.

If the Indians had canoes here once, they left none of them behind. Perhaps they took their water craft off these lakes after the devils on the island in Spirit lake devoured their braves who landed there, according to an old legend.

Whatever the reason, early-day settlers made repeated searches for canoes left behind by the red men, and never found one or pieces of one. Nor has any of the angriest storms of the many decades tossed any part of one ashore from the lake depths.

The Frenchmen who first visited these shores, first white men here probably, practically lived in their canoes, so history says. If they brought their canoes here, they followed along the Little Sioux river with them.

Rafts were used for the first crossings at narrow places on the lakes. The first boats were crude affairs made of basswood logs some 12 feet long and 22 inches across. Two of these were made in the summer of 1857. Two persons, sitting very quietly in calm water, could get around in the boats.

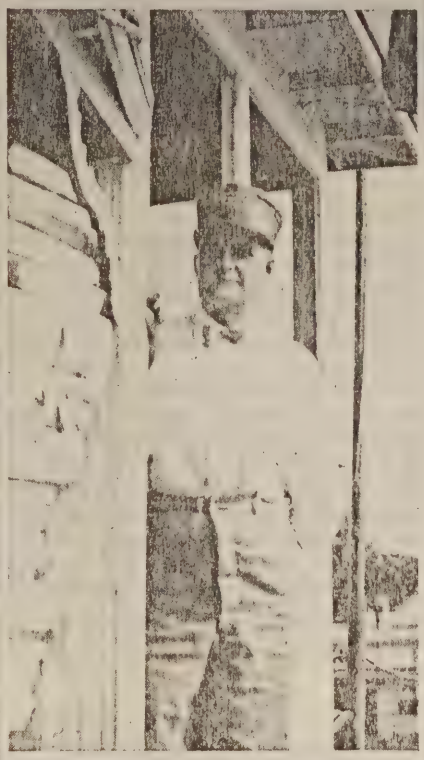
Several rowboats were made in 1858, built of wood sawed at the mill at the south end of the Okoboji strait. Not until the early 70's was there a sailboat on the lakes. The first was the "Martha Washington". Others followed in close succession until there were enough for sailing races and a yacht club.

"The Foam", a sailboat built for T. J. Francis of Spirit Lake, subsequently owned by the Henderson brothers of Arnolds Park, was the first passenger boat on the lakes. It operated between Arnolds Park and Spirit Lake in 1879.

The first steamboat was the "Favorite", built on the Cedar river and run there for a time. It was shipped to the lakes to be refitted and placed in service. The first trip to Spirit Lake was in the evening. As the boat approached the landing near the bridge there, the whistle was blown loud and clear. It almost broke up an evangelistic meeting, so startling was the sound of a steamboat whistle, for few persons knew there was one in the lake region.

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern Railway company bought the steamer "Alpha" from Burlington and placed her on Spirit lake in the summer of 1882. She was staunch and strong and carried forty passengers and many of them before she was sold to the Henderson brothers and taken to the lower lakes. The boat was one of the many attractions planned by the railroad builders to popularize the lake and their big hotel on the south shore.

Captain.



Capt. Roy Roff, son of the man who headed the Okoboji fleet, Capt. Fred Roff, and pilot of The Queen.

More and larger boats were deemed necessary when the railroad came from the south and summer resort area dreams were plentiful. In May, 1884, a large and magnificent steamer was launched and July 1 steamed proudly through East Okoboji to Orleans. She was built by a Mr. Godfrey, an experienced boat builder from the Mississippi river, at Okoboji and at her chistening was called the "Ben Lennox" in honor of an officer of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway, backers of the project.

The big boat was over eighty feet long with proportionate width and depth. She carried 300 passengers and cost between $6,000 and $7,000. She carried many capacity crowds.

The B. C. R. & N. raiload company contracted for a new and larger boat for Spirit lake, in the same year. The contract was let to the Dubuque Boat company. The steel hull was shaped and fitted at the Iowa Iron Works shop and shipped to Orleans for assembling. The wood work was done in the railroad car shops at Cedar Rapids and represented the finest in first-class coaches. Her capacity was 250 passengers, her cost was $7,500, and she was the first steel-hulled vessel on the lakes.

The new boat took to the water proudly in 1884 as the "Queen" and still rules the waters of the lake region. Dozens of boats were built and have gone their way since the "Queen" first rode the waters of Spirit lake, and she remains seaworthy and ready to carry many more generations, although she has seen sixty-two years' service.

Low water for some years late in the last century brought near-panic to the railroad project sponsors on Spirit lake. They tore down their grand hotel because they thought the lake was going dry. They proposed moving the steamer to the lower lakes.

During the winter, in January, 1901, the big boat was pulled across the isthmus onto the frozen surface of East Okoboji lake. The great weight broke the ice and its owners sold the boat as it lay to the Henderson brothers. They floated it down through East Okoboji in the spring and operated it in passenger service for two years. It was then purchased by the Okoboji Steamboat company, which still owns and operates the steamer in regular summer service.

A number of other steamers plied the waters of the Okoboji lakes for long and short intervals. Best-known of them were the "Hiawatha" and the "Iowa".

The life of the "Ben Lennox" was comparatively short. In 1900 she was run ashore at Givens' point near Okoboji and dismantled after having been known for several years as the "Manhattan" and in the service of the Manhattan Beach company for patrons of their hotel. Her hull was rotten and split up for kindling. The machinery was salvaged for Fred C. Roff, who was then building a new steamboat.

In the spring of 1900 work began on

the new boat, to become the finest on the lakes. Ribs and timbers were of oak. Douglas fir was shipped from Washington for the planking. The boat was built on the lines of the "Ben Lennox", had two decks, and was roomy and first-class in all details. Her capacity was 300 passengers and her cost was $5,000.

The proud new flagship "Okoboji" took to the water late that season and was the pride of the lake lovers for many years.

In 1901, the Okoboji Steamboat company was organized with J. R. Swearinger, Perry lumberman, as president. Frank Broadgate of Spencer was secretary and Fred Roff of Okoboji, manager and treausrer. The company purchased the "Queen" from the Henderson brothers and later rebuilt the boat and added a top deck.

After the "Okoboji" had been on the lake some years, the company built two smaller boats with ninety-passenger capacities to replace the old "Hiawatha" and "Iowa". They were christened the "Des Moines" and the "Sioux City", were both steel-hulled and each cost about $3,000. They were built on Given's point and launched with ceremonies, the "Des Moines" in 1908 and the "Sioux City" in 1911. The first one was burned at its dock Aug. 18, 1929.

The flagship "Okoboji" became unsound and was taken out of service after the season of 1922 and was wrecked. The pilot house was made into a ticket office, now in use at the steamboat dock in Arnolds Park. The cabin was used for a summer cottage. The machinery was put into the "Queen", which now remains the only steamboat in service in the lake region and Iowa.

Captain Fred Roff, so long associated with the fleet of steamers, came to the Okoboji lakes in 1881 from near Clinton where he had spent several years after leaving the family home at Amboy, Ill. He retired as captain of the "Okoboji" in about 1913 but continued management of the boats until his death Feb. 22, 1925.

Captain Roy Roff, a son of Fred Roff and pilot of the "Queen", bought into the company in 1910 and has long been a favorite of the younger set at the lakes, as a near-hero for his prowess with the big boat's pilot wheel. The captain is the "best friend" of many small boys and girls and many others who used to be, because he makes friends with the youngsters and they eventually find themselves standing outside the pilot house door admiring.

Work on the steamboats here for Captain Roy Roff is largely the story of the boats on the lakes. As a boy, he helped with the building of the "Ben Lennox" and in 1900 got a job as rope boy on the "Queen" the first summer she was in service on the lakes. At that time two boys were carried just to tie and untie the ropes at landings.

After two years on the "Queen", he went to the new "Okoboji" as rope boy for two years and then was pro-

The Queen

The Queen, as she came down from Spirit lake, without the top deck.

The Fleet

The Okoboji fleet, left to right: The flagship Okoboji, The Queen, the Des Moines, and the Sioux City. All on daily schedules around West Okoboji or up East Okoboji to Orleans for many years.

moted to pilot of the "Iowa". M. G. Elston was then fireman and "the boys" had plenty of fun running the boat. They began work in time to meet a train at 6 a.m. at the north (head end) of the lake. At that time the Rock Island station stop for the lakes was a mile north of the lake at that point, with bus transportation to and from the boats.

The "Iowa" also had the run up through East Okoboji to Orleans for two years and always laid up at 6 p.m. except on special occasions. The larger boats cared for the dance crowds. The smaller boats also met an afternoon passenger train at what is now Triboji, and provided regular scheduled trips around West Okoboji lake to accommodate passengers coming and going on the Milwaukee out of Arnolds Park and Okoboji.

Captain Roff was on the "Iowa" three seasons, went back to the "Queen" and then on to the new steamer "Des Moines" when it was launched. Captain Roy succeeded his father as pilot on the "Okoboji" when the latter retired, and remained in that service until the boat was abandoned.

Since then, Captain Roff has been on the "Queen", which maintains a regular service afternoons and evenings. The trip at sunset, leaving the Arnolds Park pier at about 7 o'clock, is the most popular because the boat leaves in daylight and returns just as lights are turned on in the amusement park.

Captain Roff has many stories to tell of his experiences on the lake. Trips in the rain, in the heat, tied up during storms, of excited passengers, of men and women and boys who are long since gone but are remembered for one or another reason, are his memories.

But — it never gets tiresome or dull, says Captain Roff, because there is always something new. That, of course, is true, because when he started steamboating on the lakes the cottages could almost be numbered by the docks at which the boats landed and in the intervening years he has seen landmarks, as well as people and boats, come and go.

The usefulness of both sailboats and steamboats was lost in proportion to the coming of motorboats and automobiles. The last of the old passenger sailing boats was the "Golden Rule" owned by Captain Charles Wing. It was one of the largest ever on the lakes and one of the finest. After its retirement, there was no passenger sailboat until about 1938 when the "Nais" was put on the lake by two University of Iowa students.

Automobile traffic and roads built to all parts of the lake region thinned the patronage of the steamboats to pleasure seekers, because it was no longer necessary to go by boat from one place to another on the lakes. In the late years fast motorboats have also offered pleasure rides around the lakes.

In spite of it all, there are hundreds of persons who still consider a vacation at the lakes incomplete without a ride on the steamboat and most of the convention and camp groups make use of it for a group ride during meetings held at the lakes. It might almost be said — times change, new things come and old things go, but the "Queen" rules on forever."

Spirit Lake

Looking northwest on Spirit lake.

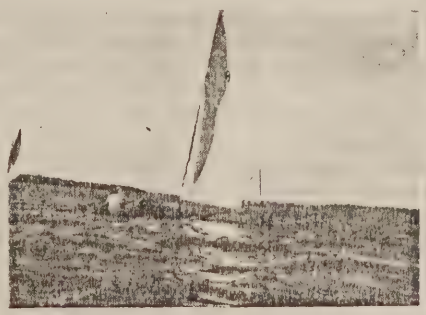
"Although going down to . . . ."
Sailboats, Yacht Clubs, Races Form Part of Lake Region Pattern

Although going down to the sea in ships has thrilled men since time began, the flying white sails on inland seas is no exception. The first sailing ships on these lakes were largely for practical purposes. Sailing was worlds better than walking around a whole lake to get to the other side, and much more fun than rowing a heavy home-made boat.

Sailboats and many sailboat races have been a part of the pattern of this region's history and continue to be. It is not known definitely who built the first sailboat on these lakes, but it was launched in the seventies after settlers had been getting along with rafts and crude rowboats since 1857.

According to R. A. Smith's history, the first sailboat may have been the "Martha Washington", built and launched by O. Crandall and a boarder in the early seventies. The "Old Tub" was built on Spirit lake at about the same time by Billy Lilywhite of the hotel. Then Zina Henderson of Okoboji built a two-master he called the "Lady of the Lake."

Sailing

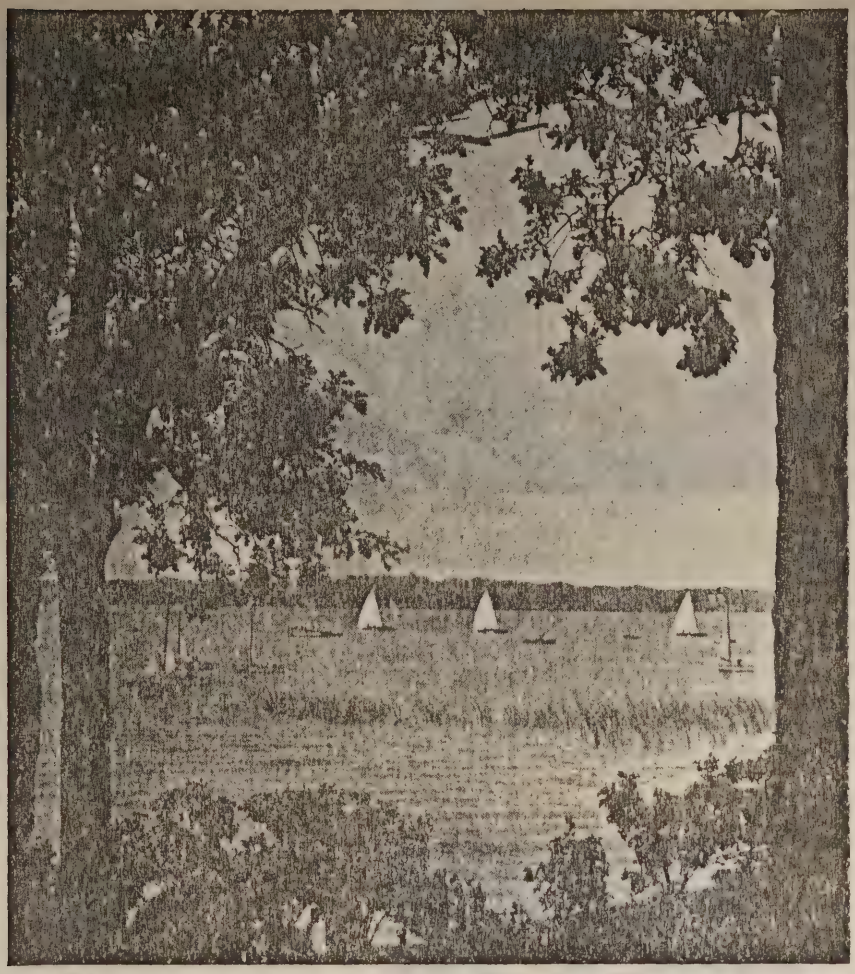


White sails on blue waters, during a yacht club race, about 1935.

The next step was racing. It was promoted first by B. B. Van Steenburg who had a model sent from New York and the "Spook" constructed from the pattern. He offered $25 to start enthusiasm for racing.

Aug. 1, 1867 was the date of the first race. There were six entires. The course was the length of the West Okoboji lake. A stiff breeze caused much tacking and a longer race. The "Old Tub" won with L. W. Waugh captain. The "Martha Washington" was second, with Mr. Crandall and R. L. Wilcox as captain and crew. Others in the race were the "Okoboji Star" with George Chase as captain; the "Lady of the Lake" with Henry Baxter and Zina Henderson on board; the "Queen of the West" with J. F. Hall, owner and captain. A second

Regatta



The finish of a sailboat regatta, about 1940.

race, scheduled for Sept. 16, had only one boat complete the course, the "Martha Washington," because of a storm.

By the next season other and larger boats were added, including the "Foam" built by T. J. Francis of Spirit Lake and still remembered by oldtimers. The first regatta was held that year, beginning July 4, with six entries. Only three boats were able to finish the third race and the "Foam" took regatta honors.

The first Okoboji Yacht club was formed at that time. Officers were: L. W. Waugh, commodore; Charles G. Chesebro, vice commodore; Henry Baxter, rear commodore; A. A. Mosher, secretary; Henry F. Rice, treasurer. Interest gradually ebbed and the yacht club ceased to exist.

Late in the century, yachting again came into top spot for entertainment and sporting interests. The first races were held with Fort Dodge point as the starting point, probably in 1900. Launch races were also held in connection. The "Inkpaduta," sailed by A. M. Johnson, Jr., of Spirit Lake, and the first "Golden Rule", and "Falcon" were among those racing boats.

By 1906, it was decided that the sailboats added much to the color of the lakes, provided an outlet for sporting and social ambitions among the summer colony residents, and the Okoboji Yacht club was formed again. There were forty or fifty members and boats of all sizes, many of them much larger than those now on the lake.

The club took over the dining room and club house erected some years earlier on Pike's point by a group of Omaha residents, and the point became the top spot for fashionable gatherings. There was dancing, dining, bathing, and billiards, not to mention the wide porches that commanded a view of the entire length of the lake from north to south. Transportation was by boat to the club and it was most exclusive. By 1908 it was incorporated and continued as the ultra-smart rendezvous.

The racing program was, of course, important. Many of the boats and races are still recalled. Some of the launches were: "Francis Flyer", owned by L. E. Francis of Spirit Lake and reputedly the fastest boat in the northwest; the "Oklahoma", owned by C. F. Colcord of Oklahoma City; the "Merry Mack's" owned by W. A. McHenry of Denison; and the "Shad", owned by M. L. Evans of Emerson, It was the long-time flag ship.

C. L. Percipal of Des Moines owned the big and fine "White Bear" sailboat and the "Japansky", owned and sailed by "Junior" Johnson, of Spirit Lake, is still remembered.

The club flourished some years. An official roster of 1910 gives the following names: C. F. Colcord, president; John Hafer, Spirit Lake, vice commodore; John L. Evans, Emerson, vice commodore; C. L. Percival, vice commodore; A. M. Johnson, Jr., treasurer; R. C. Turner, Grand Junction, secretary. The club folded up gradually, with the coming of the automobile and lake roads.

There was no organized activity for sailing enthusiasts for many years. The "Golden Rule", which Captain Charles Wing operated as a passenger boat, and the passenger "Falcon" were the only large sails on the lake for some years. Yachting never caught on for summer residents around Spirit lake.

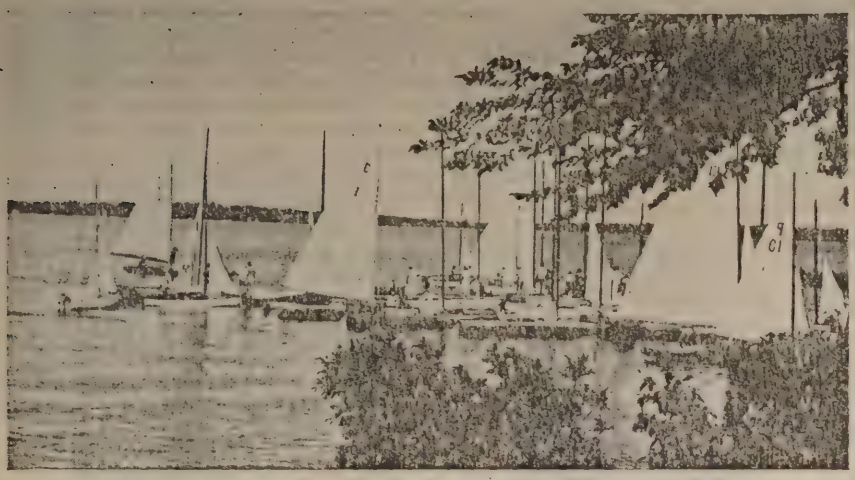
The Okoboji Yacht club was reorganized in 1933 by a group of young sailors, sons and grandsons of some of those who belonged to the 1900 yacht club. Outboard races were a part of the first schedule but activities soon gave way to sailboat events, only.

In July, 1937, the Okoboji Yacht club invited members of midwestern yacht clubs to come over for a regatta. Nationwide attention was gained, because of a sudden storm that arose and toppled all of the boats and sailors into the water. Miraculously, none of the several hundred sailors and fans was seriously injured. All but two boats reported for the next event, next morning.

The week-end nearest August 1 was then planned for the annual Okoboji Invitational regatta date for inland lakes sailors. It attracted many fine ships and brought numerous fine races. The Okoboji sailors also carried on a regatta with the Clear Lake sailors, held here every other year. Those events were stopped by the war and subsequent enlistments of Okoboji sailors. In 1945, the Okoboji Yacht club was made up chiefly of girls and young women who were carrying on for brothers and husbands in service. They had fun about the Okoboji women's navy.

There was a long list of trophies for the invitational meets. The Okoboji club continued its annual awards throughout the war. They are given at the annual meeting late each August, many of them traveling trophies and many permanent. Awards are based on points won during the races each season. The custom has

Before The Race



The Okoboji fleet just before a race, waiting for wind at the Gull point state park dock on a Sunday morning.

been for racing each Wednesday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning. There are also special races, such as the "Father's day" race, and trophies for the youngest sailor, best sportsman, etc.

Ever since its erection, the Gull Point state park lodge has been the official meeting place for the club and the pier there is often the starting place for the races. Social activities are held there. Twice each season the young sailors have "moonlight" races and a picnic to follow. It has become custom for the commodore to entertain captains and crews at dinner. Membership is not restricted and includes many who are not sailors and who do not live on the lake.

Officers elected for the 1946 season were: L. R. Sandahl, Des Moines, commodore; Howard Harvey, Okoboji, first vice commodore; Dr. J. P. Schwartz, Des Moines, second vice commodore; Patty Berglund, Boone, secretary; Mary Schwartz, Des Moines, treasurer. Directors named at the annual meeting in August, 1945, were: George Montgomery, Boone, 1945 commodore; Gerald Jewett, Des Moines; Lawrence Davidson, Sioux City, F. K. Lytle, Sioux City, a former commodore; J. M. Harding, Omaha; Dr. H. J. Marshall, Des Moines; F. J. Lineberger, Des Moines; Phillip Steltzer, Boone; Granger P. Mitchell, Fort Dodge; John Rude, Marshalltown; Lucius Fitch, Des Moines; Virgil Haggart, Omaha; and Lt. Gov. K. A. Evans, Emerson.

Some of the more familiar ships now on the lake and in the races, held three times a week, are the Sea Hawk, Slipry Sloop, Aloha, C-Hag, Wahwatosi, Waitansee, Pee Dee Que, Duck Soup, Padorjim, Royal Flush, Sea Biscuit, The Legend, and Censored.

The Start

Two sailboats in the second Okoboji Yacht club, at the tip end of Pike's point, showing the club house on the point.

Regatta

Sailboat regatta scene—the morning after the big storm.

"One of the always-interesting . . . ."

Lake Waters Constantly Fluctuate Over Long Periods of Low and High

One of the always-interesting things in the lake region is the rise nad fall of the lake waters. There is a legend-like story that the waters fluctuate in seven-year cycles. History gives dates that seem to prove it true, although the cycles are apparent, not harmonic.

It is said, too, that the seven-year cycles move in gigantic cycles of thirty-odd years from extreme to extreme. Those who visit here annually note the regular movement of the water from year to year.

There are no records available to prove how low the water was at any extreme period, nor how high it was at the other extreme, before or since the first settlers came here in 1856. At best, a few old pictures and the memories of long-time residents, fix dates and places to indicate water levels.

The Okoboji lakes reached a very low period in 1931, when the bathing beach at Arnolds Park was 85 feet wide from

the retaining wall to the water. Spring rains of 1932 raised the level and cut the beach to 41 feet wide. The water came up steadily until it was within 24 feet of the wall on May 11, 1939.

Spirit lake reached its lowest point in the summer of 1939, slightly less than the 1935 measurement which is used by the United States Geological Survey. It was a full five years after the low period on the Okoboji lakes and after they had begun the cycle back to higher levels. Spirit lake was approximately five feet, seven inches higher than the low period of 1935, when measured May 11, 1939.

The 1917 high mark was nine feet above that of 1935, according to observations made by Howard Graesing of the state pike hatchery at Orleans, for the United States Geological Survey. With those figures, it is apparent that Spirit lake was in 1939 still three feet, eight inches below the 1917 high level. It has remained relatively constant since that time.

The last period of extremely high water on the Okoboji lakes was in 1909, although the water was very high in 1917 and 1918, and was fairly high again in the middle 20's. Pictures taken on Pillsbury's point in 1902 and 1931 show huge rocks exposed in about the same proportion, although histories state the lake was lowest in 1898.

The last high water stage on all of the lakes is given as 1917 by the biological survey. The fall of Spirit lake from that date was steady to 1935-36, although it annually gained some after the spring rains.

Since April 1, 1938, in contrast to previous years, the rise of Spirit lake has been slow but constant, with no noticeable losses. This is accounted for by the fact that during 1937-38 the lake's inlets, numerous small lakes and sloughs, were filled and in 1938 began spilling into Spirit lake through inlets that had been dry for years. Subsequent rains and snows caused constant flow into the lakes which are still at good levels and supplying water to the big lake regularly after rains and heavy snows.

From April 1, 1938 to April 1, 1939, Spirit lake had gained three feet, one inch. It raised an additional inch from April 1 to May 11, 1939. The level is measured daily by attendants at the hatchery, for the biological survey records.

There are no exact figures available for the exact raise in the level of the Okoboji lakes but evidence on the beaches is enough that the rise is slow and steady. Many of the long sandy beaches that were exposed for many years are now under water again.

Another interesting fact about the water levels and the lakes is that geographically the normal water level of Spirit lake is some five or six feet above that of the Okobojis. That has been a puzzle because Spirit lake does not spill over into East Okoboji, and there is no known outlet into the lower lake.

In October, 1937, the water of East Okoboji was eleven inches higher, geographically, than in Spirit lake, a fact that had until then been considered impossible. Early in May, 1939, the normal relation was fast approaching with East Okoboji about 34 inches lower than Spirit lake.

The relative positions of Spirit and East Okoboji lakes, geographically, have caused many debates. There are those who argue that in times of drought Spirit lake, would, necessarily, drain into East Okoboji. Others maintain the cause of the receding waters of Spirit lake was a "leak" into East Okoboji — if not, why did East Okoboji rise and Spirit lake continue to get lower? Surveyors once made borings all along the isthmus

Extremely Wide Beach

The bathing beach at Arnolds park in late 1932.

Wide Beach

The bathing beach at Arnolds Park in early season, 1933.

Narrow Beach

The bathing beach at Arnolds Park in September, 1938.

High Water

Showing growth of trees destroyed at edge of Hottes lake in 1938 water rise.

Low Water

Rocks along Pillsbury's point, 1932.

Rising Water

Rocks along west shore Pillsbury's point, spring 1934.

without finding any signs of a "leak" or underground connection between the lakes.

Spirit lake is shallower, has few feeders, and the Okobojis are deeper and have many inlets. West Okoboji particularly has many gulleys and inlets and has springs feeding through the bottom. All of the feeders into Spirit lake were dry and had to be filled before Spirit lake could receive the inflow of water that the lower lakes got with every rain.

Prof. Floyd Nagler of the University of Iowa, pointed out some years ago that the normal amount of evaporation is greater for Spirit lake than the Okobojis. He also stated the present 92 per cent of natural drainage is under cultivation and a contributing factor to the water levels.

The drainage area of the lakes is 130 square miles, of which about 55 square miles are in the area around the Okobojis. Many square miles of the natural water shed of Spirit lake have been cut off in road building.

Measurements furnished by Mr. Graesing and the survey are vertical. An 18-inch rise of water on Spirt lake would mean approximately 200 feet on the west shore where the slope is shallow, and about fifty feet in front of the Orleans hotel. The same would apply on the Okoboji lakes, in proportion to the slope of the beach.

The rise in Spirit lake in 1938 covered many small trees that had grown along the lakeshore. In the vicinity of Hottes lake there were trees possibly twenty years old covered to a depth of four feet when the lake level raised. Along the west shore of Spirit lake there were trees under 18 inches of water after the spring rains. They were ten to twelve feet high. The water is still standing in Hottes lake and the trees engulfed by the water in 1938 are now dead or dying. The same is true on all places where the water covered growths of trees and other vegetations.

Records show that between 1873 and 1930, the dates tend to verify the memories of older residents. It is known the lakes were very low in 1856-57, when the first settlers came, and that they gradually became higher until 1882-83. From then on the waters receded again to the low mark of 1897-98, and back again to the high mark of 1908-09.

The six driest years, state records show, were in 1894, 1898, 1901, 1910, and 1930. The wettest years were 1881, 1903, 1909, tending to show the high and low periods of water levels followed closely with drought and rainfall.

The fluctuating water levels of these lakes has contributed a lot to its history. Two mills were established on the lakes during early days and abandoned in the next low water period. Two dams were blown out at the outlet by angry citizens who didn't like the way

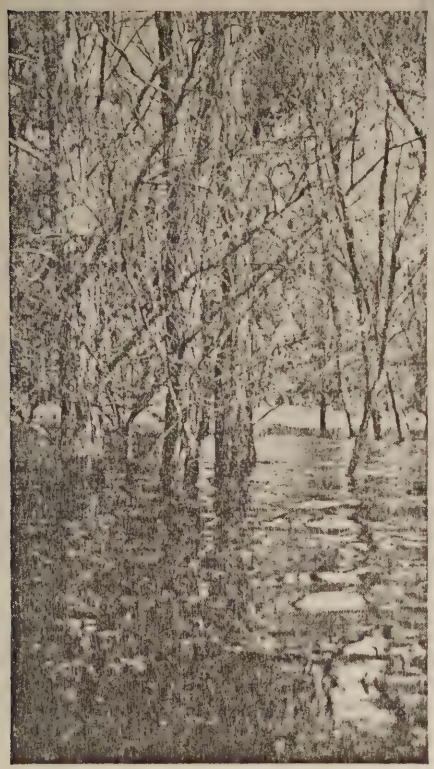
the water was "backing up" onto their property. Others argued that, without the dams, the lakes would go dry. There was considerable litigation over the water's encroachment on private property in the early days.

In 1899 the first Orleans hotel was torn down, because its owners thought Spirit lake was going dry. The high and low waters have also affected the road building of the region to some extent.

(Note: This story was written in 1939 and gives a good picture of the general rise and fall of lake waters. In the summer of 1944, the water of West Okoboji lake was very high, much higher than many cottagers had ever seen it. There was some public complaining about the high water because it undermined some cottage lakefront areas, principally those that had been filled and improved, and covered bathing beaches.

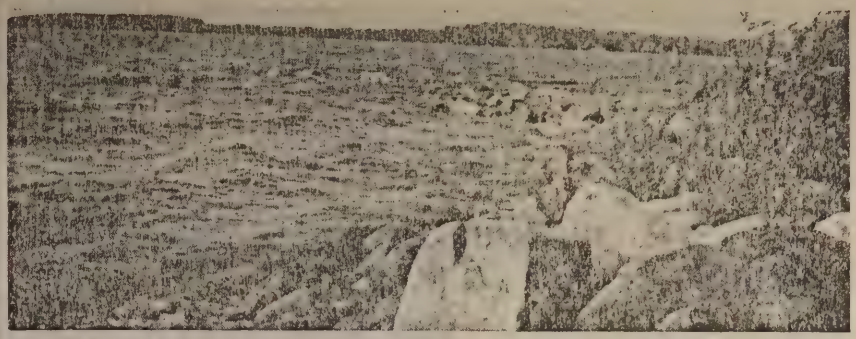
(A public meeting was sponsored by the Okoboji Protective association, with the State Conservation Commission and its engineers. Oldtimers there declared the lake had been higher in years past, and much lower. The engineers showed that the rise and fall is due to the natural periods of rainfall and drought and that there was no immediate remedy for the situation. The water remained high through the summer of 1945.)

Damage



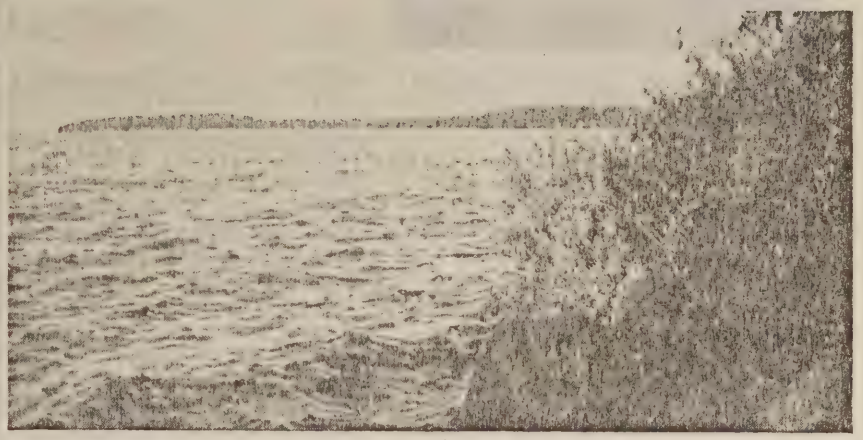
In 1938, sizeable trees were destroyed by the rising water in Hottes lake.

Rising Water



Off the tip of Pillsbury's point, early 1933. Note pointed rock.

Low Water



Off the tip of Pillsbury's point, 1934. Note pointed rock.

High Water

High water along west shore Pillsbury's point, 1938.

"West Okoboji lake . . . ."

No Interpretation for Okoboji; West lake One of Many in This Region

West Okoboji lake, heralded around the world as having beauty comparable to Lake Geneva in Switzerland and Lake Louise in Canada, has other distinctions.

One of the biggest is, perhaps, that nobody knows where the name came from, nor what it means. Another is that it has a sister lake, Spirit, that is almost as widely known as Okoboji, and about the name of which there is also a question.

It all goes back to the massacre. Before then, there were no white men here to learn about Indian names and places. It is believed French trappers occasionally came this way, and that some of them were here long enough to gain a fair knowledge of the region before 1700. After the massacre, Indians didn't come back. Names of the lakes, then, were adapted from what white men had heard in a round-about way from the trappers.

R. A. Fulton, in his book "The Red Men of Iowa", published in 1881, possibly wrote the first about this region into a book. He said "Lewis and Clark's French interpreter described other localities in the country of the Sioux nation, now known to be within the boundaries of Iowa, with sufficient accuracy to warrant that he had some knowledge of the geography of the county, though not strictly accurate in some respects.

"He described the Little Sioux as having its source within nine miles of the Des Moines, as passing through a large lake nearly sixty miles in circumference, and divided into two parts which approach each other very closely, as being very irregular in its width, as having many islands, and being known by the name of Lac d'Esprit, or Spirit Lake.

"This lake is in the country of the Sioux, from the earliest knowledge of white men the chief seat of one of the Sioux tribes, we now know by the names of Spirit Lake and Lake Okoboji. The Sioux name of Spirit Lake was Min-ne Mocoche Waukon, or "Lake of the Spirit." It is related there was once an island in it which the Indians never ventured upon. They had a tradition that once several of the tribe landed upon the island from a canoe, when they were instantly seized and devoured by demons, and hence the name."

Later, in his book, Fulton says "The name is of Dakota origin, but the meaning is uncertain", when referring to Okoboji.

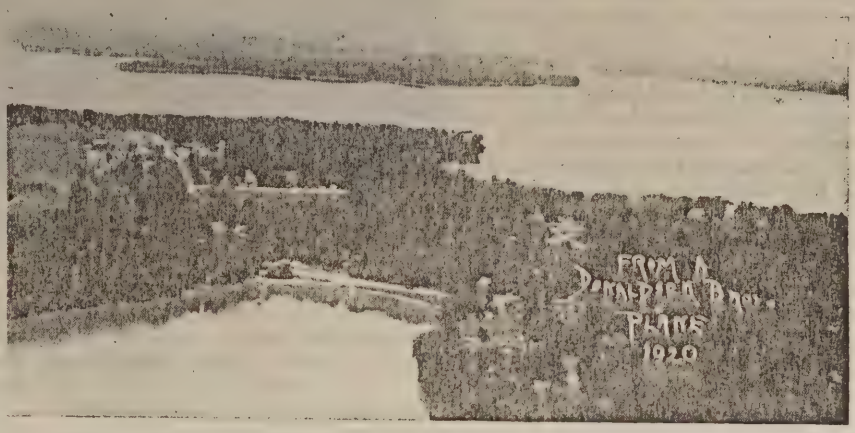
Prof. F. I. Herriott of Drake university, made an exhaustive search and failed to find any Sioux connection between the name Spirit lake or possibly Mini-Wakan for the lake. The Sioux has no word Okoboji, his research disclosed.

When it is understood that Lewis and Clarke were through the Louisiana Purchase in 1804, and that this region was fairly well known then, it is not surprising to learn that the lakes appeared on a map as early as 1720, and that map was still circulated when white men began to turn their eyes this way in search of homesteads.

The maps showed the Des Moines river much bigger than either the Mississippi or Missouri, and as having its source in a lake many times larger than the combined area of all the lakes in Iowa. The map was at one time published in the *Annals of Iowa.*

Perhaps it is not strange that all early travelers reckoned these lakes larger than they are. Scientists state that there were many bogs and kettle-holes in northwest Iowa. First settlers found many more small lakes and ponds, much swampy area, and without actually exploring the whole territory, the Frenchmen probably did think all of the lakes were a part of one large lake. Their mention of islands

Airplane View



Williamz air view of the lakes. Looking west from a point over Lake Minnewashta. The amusement park is at the right of where the picture ends. Miller's bay is at the upper right. Emerson's bay is at the upper left. Pillsbury's point is shown middle center.

Airplane View

Williamz air view looking toward the north, showing Arnolds Park and the highway and railroad grades. West Okoboji is on the left, East Okoboji on the right. Large building center is the Arnolds Park schoolhouse.

Sunken Lake

Sunken lake—the one that seems to be a freak. It is privately owned, has been used for a rough fish holding pond.

was not borne out by early settlers, however. The only lakes to have islands are Silver lake at Lake Park and Center lake near West Okoboji. The latter island disappears in high water.

The first authentic account of this region was contained in the official report of young Nicollet, a government surveyor, who made observations April 6, 1838. He wrote: "It has been heretofore designated as the Little Sioux and has its origin from a group of lakes, the most important of which is called by the Sioux "Minnie Waukon" or "Spirit Lake", hence its name of Spirit Lake. The surveyor made no mention of the Okobojis, but simply designated the entire group by the simple "Spirit Lake." His observations were made near Crandall's lodge on the northwest shore of Spirit lake.

The old Nicollet maps, and copies, were used by early settlers. The larger portion of Spirit lake was shown in Minnesota, but at that time the state boundary had not been surveyed.

R. A. Smith, in his history, brings up the idea that it may have been General John C. Fremont, then a young engineer, who was with Nicollet and who wrote their report. He was the first republican candidate for president of the United States.

Origin and meaning of Okoboji is lost. Even R. A. Smith, writing in 1900, said it was "a little uncertain." It supposedly came from the Dakotas as "Okoboozhy" but nobody seems certain on that point, not even Mr. Smith. He quoted Dr. Thomas Huston Macbride, author of a geographical survey, as saying it meant "place of rest" and someone else as interpreting it is "and there are others."

The best guess is that settlers heard the name somewhere, liked it, and tried to translate its sounds into English characters and ended by spelling it Okoboji.

Supposedly only East Okoboji was called by that name by the Indians and West Okoboji was called "Minnietonka" which was the settlers' spelling to signify the Sioux for Big Water.

William Granger, the only one left of the Red Wing, Minn., group of young men, wanted the lake called "Lake Harriott" for Dr. Isaac H. Harriott, and East Okoboji called "Rice lake" in honor of Senator Henry M. Rice, then United States senator from Minesota.

Once upon a time there was a big story, said to have been published widely in eastern newspapers, that a powerful Sioux chieftan, called Okoboji, had been buried here. So widely spread was the story that many people who visited here in the early days asked to have the chief's burial place pointed out to them. There were Indian burial mounds found here, and some of them opened on the east shore of the lake just below the present Arnolds Park, but there was never any authentic story about a Chief Okoboji. The contents of the mounds here were taken to the historical museum in Iowa City.

There are fourteen lakes in Dickinson county, and a number that are now dry or have been drained. Center lake, formerly an inlet into West Okoboji lake at Hayward's bay, was known first as Snyder's lake because Bertell Snyder took his claim on that small but beautifrl water now visible from the paved highway between Arnolds Park and Spirit Lake. For a year or two it was also known as Sylvan lake but gradually Center lake was substituted and it stayed.

It is almost certain the Gar lakes were so named because of the schools of gars there in the early days. The three small lakes south of East Okoboji, and the outlet of the two big lakes, were known as Upper, Middle, and Lower Gar lakes. Late in the century, after the return of Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp to residence here, she re-named Middle Gar and called it "Minewashta" of the Dakotah corruption for "Good Lake". It is the middle one of the three, lies along Highway 71 in Arnolds Park, and is as beautifual as a lake can be, with bays and wooded shores.

Little Spirit lake and Hottes lake lie at the northwest and west of Spirit lake and are inlets to the big body of water. In severe drouth, they dry up first before the big lake is affected. When the rains come, they must fill up and overflow before the big lake receives any benefits as it has no important inlets except through these lakes. Spirit lake has no visible outlet, although in early days there was a small rivulet from it to East Okoboji, long since dried up.

Sunken lake, smallest of them all, is somewhat like a huge raindrop that fell in a place alone and grew there. It lies between Hottes and Marble lakes and is

East Okoboji

The extreme north end of East Okoboji lake, taken from the highway north to Orleans. At a point near the telephone pole, left, there is a seepage of water from a pasture west of the highway, where early residents said there was once a natural outlet from Spirit lake.

Marble Lake

Marble lake, west of Spirit lake. Looking north from point west of the Marble cabin. This is the only lake which retains the name of a settler killed by the Indians.

East Okoboji

East Okoboji lake. Looking east from the place the railroad tracks cross the highway at the Okoboji grade. Near Mattock cabin. The State Conservation stripping station, used for stripping pike during the pike-hatching season, is at extreme right.

Spirit Lake

Spirit lake. Looking south from Templar park.

separated from Spirit lake by a natural wall of drift and sand a rod wide and 15 feet high. The shores are abrupt and unbroken, much as though a huge ladle of dirt had been scooped out and subsequent rains had filled the hole to cover the scar.

Large and small trees and bushes grow almost to the water's edge. There are no natural lake growths or fishes. The lakes is nearly round and has neither sandy nor rocky beaches. The lake's formation is such that early settlers did much guessing about it, some thought it was of recent formation.

The theory is discounted by the large natural barrier, and makes it seem impossible that it was once a cove on the big lake, since it has no vegetation. The late Dr. Thomas Huston Macbride, after a geological survey, expressed belief that the lake is as old as the others but just simply a freak. It has no visible outlet, is ten feet deep, and gets water from the surrounding hills. His guess was that the glacier left some huge chunks of ice that melted into a pool of clear, cold water — a gem of the prairie and lake country.

Silver lake at Lake Park is a beautiful body of water and has open spaces and woodland around its shores, with several good inlets.

Welsh and Diamond lakes are two small bodies of water lying north of West Okoboji and south of the state line. They are used by the State Conservation Commission for nurseries for young pike. Swan lake is a double lake northwest of Superior and a fine fishing lake It is also typical with open and wooded shores.

Other lakes such as Prairie, east of East Okoboji, and Pleasant lake, still further east, have dried up for want of inlets obliterated by cultivation of the surrounding soil. Many of the lowlands, once probably small lakes, have been drained to provide tillable lands.

Spirit lake occupies all or part of fourteen sections and is pear-shaped with the broad end extending more than three miles along the Minnesota line and the small end reaching south four miles into Iowa. The water is up to 30 feet deep and it has open country, well-defined banks, and some woodland on its shores. The meander line encloses 5,684 acres and it is the largest lake in Iowa.

East Okoboji takes up part of thirteen sections, has an area of 1,875 acres and is long, narrow, and irregular, with maximum depth of 25 feet near its south end which is seven miles distant from the north end. It is a little more than three miles, east to west and at the narrows near Spirit Lake the water shoals are only four feet or less.

Banks of East Okoboji are uniformly high, its shores are heavily wooded for the most part, gravel beaches are around the lake, and there is almost no lowland touching it.

The watershed of the entire chain of lakes, including Spirit and its lesser lakes and the Okobojis and Gars, is 84,500 acres.

West Okoboji occupies parts of fifteen sections, is nearly six miles from north to south and averages a mile in width. Three large bays indent the west shore, and two are on the east. The banks are generally high and well-defined, wooded, and many smaller low places lie adjacent or near the big lake. The maximum depth, as given by the 1916 survey of the Iowa Highway Commission, is 132 feet. The main lake is deep and the south end is very irregular bottom.

The water of West Okoboji lake is remarkably clear and the most severe storms only ruffle its surface. The area is 3,788 acres. The meander line encloses 3,939 acres.

There are no large feeders into West Okoboji, but drainage into both the Okobojis is by small gulleys. The big lake always maintains a satisfactory level. The outlet of West Okoboji is into East Okoboji through Smith's bay at Okoboji town. The outlet of all the lakes is through the Gars into the Little Sioux south of Lower Gar.

Center lake occupies all or part of four sections, has an area of 264 acres, is fairly deep, has good fishing, and no outlet since erosion and time have closed the outlet into West Okoboji. The lake lost considerable of its watershed of 883 acres when the highway was built.

Hottes and Marble lakes occupy all or parts of five sections, are up to seven feet deep, have sand and gravel bottoms, with areas of 175 acres and 312 acres, respectively. Their combined meander is 4,936 acres of which 464 acres are in Minnesota.

Little Spirit covers all or part of six sections in Iowa and Minnesota, is up to 12 feet deep, has gravel beaches, wooded and high banks, an area of 724 acres of which 214 are in Iowa. The watershed is 2,462 acres. Outlet is into Spirit lake.

Lake Minnewashta

North shore of Lake Minnewashta, a familiar sight to motorists as the highway parallels the lake at this point. Picture taken from highway. South edge of Okoboji cemetery touches the lakeshore here. It is the only cemetery in Iowa that is on a lake, was laid out by early settlers.

Hottes Lake

Hottes lake, west of Spirit lake, has an inlet into Spirit. As seen from the gravel highway around the lake. Picture is looking west.

Center Lake

Center lake, looking west.

"It was not until . . . ."

State Areas, Slow in Coming, Now Have Important Role in Vacationing

It was not until 1932, when most of the lakeshore property on West Okoboji lake had been purchased for private use, and there became almost no place for the public to get to the lake without trespassing, that a movement began to obtain public lands.

The first step was taken without public pressure by the State Fish and Game Commission in 1932. Negotiations were concluded in August for the purchase of a tract of land at Pike's point on West Okoboji lake, to provide access to the lake for the department business. At the time of the purchase, which had consumed nearly a year in advance work, it was announced definitely that the land would be open to the public as it was property of the State of Iowa, but that it would not be a state park.

At that time the fish and game department was separated from the conservation department and did not have the legal authority to buy land for parks. After that time, the two public divisions were merged into the State Conservation Commission and the land was taken over and made into a state park.

The tract included 7:14 acres and was about 500 feet wide. All of the point

was included and a small piece of land east across the road. Purchase was for $7,745 of the Van Steenburg family, the D. C. Patterson estate, and M. L. Kuhn of Spirit Lake. The state took immediate possession.

The point, a low sandy triangle with fine pebbly beaches on both sides, had long been a favorite spot for picnics and was adjacent to good fishing grounds. The triangle was grass-grown, had some beautiful large trees and the beaches were grown rather thickly with young willows. A road through the area provided access to the lakes for the fish

Park Scene

Boathouse and look-out tower at Gull point. Picture 1934.

trucks taking small fish to the lake and the trucks with workmen at gill-netting time in the spring.

The spot of ground was ideal for a state park. At the south is a beautiful full-sweep view of the lake to the south shore at Terrace park. At the north is the beautiful wooded area and the Methodist Camp Grounds and Triboji. Opposite is woodland and hillside.

The property was among those of special historical interest on West Okoboji lake. At one time it was the gathering place for the socially elite and many of the outstanding events of the day were staged at Pike's point.

Original land entry on the property was made by James D. Hawkins in 1860. It was recorded as a purchase from the government. Who Hawkins was or where he came from is not known. It was not until many years after 1860 that buildings were erected on the land near the point.

For the last sixty years the place has been known largely as the Cousins farm, because it was owned for many years by James Cousins.

In 1892, D. C. Patterson and J. E. Baum, prominent Omaha bankers, purchased 15.65 acres of land from Cousins, all of it on the lakeshore. The price was $1,965.

Patterson and Baum erected the cottage that stood on the high bank south of the point and it became a landmark of the lake, was supposedly a replica of the United States treasury building, and visible for miles. It is presumed it was erected soon after the land was purchased. The Patterson and Baum families occupied it.

The two men launched a resort project, built the white cottage, and several others nearby. They called it the Omaha plat. A dining room and kitchen were built and the colony operated on the club plan. The exact length of the venture has not been definitely fixed, but it was some years.

The Patterson family, including parents and children Charles, Marion, and Eugenie, continued to make their summer home at the cottage. At the time of the purchase by the state the parents were dead. Charles lived in New York City. Marion was Mrs. Kellogg Fairbank of Chicago, and Eugenie was the Countess Bellini delle Stelle of Italy.

When and why a local legend grew up and the house was dubbed haunted, is not known. It had been vacant for many years prior to the time the adjacent land was purchased by the state and was called a ghost house. Many persons declared it had been abandoned, with the table set for a meal and other marks to show the family had gone away without preparation. Others had a version of the tale that a beautiful young girl, despondent over the death of a lover, had thrown herself off the high cliff to her death and that her mother had left the place immediately.

Insofar as could be learned, at the time of the land purchase, none of the ghost stories were true. It seemed, rather, that the Patterson family had grown up and left home and the cottage just merely was not used.

One story has it that the building was a part of the exhibit at the World's Exposition in Chicago in 1894, and was brought here and re-assembled after the fair. However it was, the property remained in the Patterson family until it was sold in the summer of 1941 to Lawrence Davidson of Sioux City. Through the years the old house had seen cottages begin the slow encroachment toward its lonely setting and become merely one of the cottages along that section of lakeshore.

The state's purchase was 168 feet north from the Patterson estate, bringing the state line to within 100 feet of the famous white building.

Pike's point was the center of social activity late in the century and for many years during the popularity of sailboats. A. M. Johnson, Jr., of Spirit Lake, recalls that the Okoboji Yacht club was organized in 1897 and a series of ten races were held on Mondays and

Park Beach

Gull Point state park lakefront scene.

Thursdays each summer for many years. Silver trophy cups went to the winners. The old dining hall on Pike's point was acquired as a club house and it was placed on pillars and a porch built entirely around it. All of the club activities centered around the place with dances and dinners in much the same manner as a present-day popular country club.

The club flourished six or seven years and began to decline when the faster motorboats came into popularity. The clubhouse, then managed by Mrs. Harry Brownell, was abandoned. The point gradually lost its patronage of steamboats, motorboats, and sailboats, mostly for the reason that sailboats left off being the principle means of conveyance

around the lakes. The building was finally torn down and only a cement block or two, almost overgrown by grass, can be found. The toboggan slide, erected for the sailing patrons, has long since been forgotten.

The Pike's point state park was officially opened as such several years after its purchase and after the departments were consolidated. CCC workmen from the Milford camp built a double-faced shelter house of native rock and logs, cut away the willow growths along the beaches, built fireplaces and tables, and improved the area in general. It is now the most popular park in this region and possibly in Iowa as it accommodates hundreds of persons daily throughout the season and some the year around. The principle attraction is the beautiful location and the constant cooling breeze and usual absence of flies.

Gull point state park is one of the finest in the state. It was opened to the public in 1935 by the former State Board of Conservation with money from its funds and a large amount subscribed in a campaign conducted among local and summer residents. The tract includes 82 acres of virgin oak forest so situated as to provide a wide choice of uses.

Development was begun immediately after its purchase, and the work was all done by CCC enrollees from the Milford camp. A lodge, said at the time to have been the most beautiful erected by CCC labor in the nation, was built on the lakeshore overlooking West Okoboji lake. It is built to conform to the lay of the land and is 72x36 feet in size. It is of split boulder and log construction, the logs having been shipped here from Oregon for the building, and is built for year-around use.

A large stone fireplace is at the south end of the great hall and a circle of windows overlooks the lake on the north. Rustic furniture with comfortable upholstry completes the great hall. Rustic tables and chairs were provided for the dining room. The kitchen is in an L, 28 x 34 feet with windows overlooking a large porch and the lake. Another L on the west has a check room and rest rooms.

The lodge is open the year around and is a popular gathering place for public conventions, Okoboji Yacht club activities, and similar groups. It is also used extensively for private parties, school banquets, and several weddings have been held there.

A stone boathouse is on the lakeshore near the lodge, facing the crescent-shaped bay and has a two-story hexagon tower. The custodian's residence is of the same construction, near the park entrance. There is a large picnic area well equipped with tables, fireplaces, and a well, and ample parking space for several hundred cars.

There are four miles of rustic trails laid out through the timberland, most of which was not disturbed in any way in development of the park and is a game refuge and a splendid place for nature study. The long sand beach of the point itself is now being used for bathing and is a game and waterfowl refuge in quiet seasons. The woods abounds with small animals and wild flowers and the landscaping of the lodge grounds is all with native flowers and bushes.

Mini-Wakan state park on the extreme north shore of Spirit lake was the second area acquired by the former Fish and Game Commission, and was subsequently made into a state park. It was purchased through efforts of the Spirit Lake Commercial club, the Spirit Lake Protective and Improvement association, and individual donors and given to the state.

The area is only 12½ acres but most of it is of native virgin timber that had never been disturbed by man. There are about 1,000 feet of shoreline on a beautiful sand beach, most of it still wild and natural, with the entire sweep of the lake at the south. The state built a three-quarter mile highway to the park from the west in 1933 and that provided a connecting link needed for a drive around Spirit lake.

The CCC labor built a splendid stone shelter house, first used in 1934, and a picnic area at the park. Except for that small area, the timberland was not disturbed and is a favorite place for nature study. Some of the trees are huge old elms but there are many other kinds of trees and the woods abounds with wild life and flowers.

There are numerous footpaths through the deep woods that seem almost primitive and a beautiful stone footbridge was built over the inlet at the west side of the park area which connects with the wild lakeshore area east of Crandall's lodge. Here, the students of nature find interesting things in the movement of the winter ice and other natural phenomenon. The park is now open for camping.

Choice of a name for the park gave it that of the original Sioux for myster-

Gull Point Lodge

Gull Point park lodge, overlooking the lake.

Famous Cottage

The famous Patterson cottage south of Pike's point.

ious waters. The park is not as extensively used as the others but gives much to the lake region because it is distinctly different and wild and natural.

The Pillsbury's point state park is only 2½ acres in size. It comprises the lakeshore property that is Pillsbury's point itself and CCC laborers built walks and stone benches for further public enjoyment of the point. There is a small picnic area a short distance from the point itself and a trail leads along the lake shore in front of the cottages on Sunset beach. The area outside the sidewalks is state property for some distance towards the south. Smallest state park is that lot upon which the monument to the Spirit Lake massacre victims stands, adjacent to the Gardner cabin property on the same point.

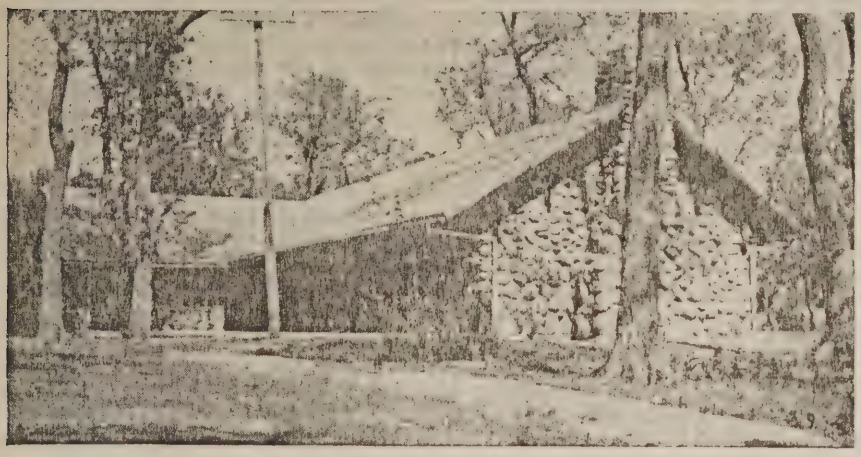
June 9, 1933, the State Board of Conservation accepted a gift of 57 acres from an insurance company, for park purposes on the north shore of Silver lake at Lake Park. Of that area, 25 acres was set aside for spawning area. A small shelter house was built and outdoor fireplaces and picnic equipment. A new road was built to the park and it is a popular gathering place for that area.

The state also owns the south half of the isthmus between East Okoboji and Spirit lakes. The east portion is occupied by the state pike hatchery and grounds and the west portion is more or less wild. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to finance its conversion into a park with landscaping and other attractions. It is used mainly for camping and some sports events.

Pike's Point

Pike's Point park double shelter.

Shelter House



Mini-Wakan state park shelter house.

"The matter of receiving mail . . . ."

Mail Service Divided Among Eight Lake Region Postoffices

The matter of receiving mail and telegrams in the Okoboji-Spirit lake region is one of the complexities of this summer resort area. There are eight possible addresses and unless one on vacation sends his proper address home, he'll likely not get any mail.

To send a letter to John Doe, Lake Okoboji, or just Okoboji, is almost positive assurance he will not receive the letter. Unless John Doe notifies a postoffice that he may receive mail, he is also likely not to get it because there is no way of knowing where he is and to whom it should be delivered.

The problem is not entirely without an answer, however. Those persons stopping at a hotel are sure to get their mail. Those stopping at a group of widely-known cottages are sure to get their's, if the cottage name is included on the address.

The same is true of telegrams and telephone calls. There are Western Union operators in Arnolds Park for the season and the year-around in Spirit Lake. The lake region telephone exchange is at Spirit Lake. There are several hundred to over a thousand cottages around the lakes. Unless there is a definite address, like a street and number in a city, delivery is impossible. Messengers can't knock on every cottage door to ask for John Doe.

Let's get at the postoffice problem in an orderly manner. The vacationer who has a cottage in Arnolds Park, gets his mail at the Arnolds Park postoffice. That area includes everything from the Okoboji bridge south to Maywood.

The Milford rural route starts at Maywood and covers the south end of the lake and part of the west side to South Manhattan beach. At that place, the Spirit Lake rural route meets the Milford rural route and a few cottages may choose which address they prefer.

The Spirit Lake routes care for the north end of West Okoboji lake, from Manhattan beach north to and including the cottages on Hayward's bay. There

is a summer postoffice at the Methodist Camp Grounds, serving that immediate area. Some persons at the far north end of the lake get their mail at Montgomery.

The Okoboji postoffice, the first one, serves the area south to the Okoboji bridge, from Hayward's bay. The Inn was formerly a summer postoffice and handled considerable mail for cottages both north and south of the hotel. The Inn is now served through the Okoboji postoffice and cottagers call for their mail at Okoboji. The area is from Hayward's bay to the bridge and along East Okoboji lake beyond Brooks' beach.

The Spirit Lake postoffice serves the East Okoboji lake cottages south of that town.

There is a summer postoffice at Orleans, mainly for summer patrons. The Spirit Lake mail route covers the permanent residents. Mail for Templar park is dispatched through the Spirit Lake postoffice.

"The lake region has . . . ."

Lake Region Has Its Own Distinctive Booster Organizations

The lake region has its own distinctive organizations, and the county in general has most of the well-known fraternal, civic, and public groups.

The Okoboji Protective association is an organization made up primarily of summer residents, for summer residents and the general welfare of the lakes, themselves. It was organized in 1905 by a group of cottagers, for mutual protection of cottage property and for the welfare of the lakes. The association has been active since then and has brought about many improvements in the lakes area, of special benefit to summer residents.

The association sponsored the first move to compel fishermen to be licensed and to preserve fish by definite catch limits. Prior to that, no license was needed and there were no regulations to prohibit seining of game fish and they were often hauled away by the barrelsful and sold to markets.

The association sponsored the Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary Sewage system by inaugurating preliminary surveys and carrying the matter to the Iowa General Assembly. The association sponsored legislation to regulate speeds and zones for motorboats after the "Miss Thriller" accident. It has worked with the State Conservation Commission to improve spawning areas, fishing, and for removal of rough fish.

The association has co-operated with the work of the Iowa Lakeside laboratory and encouraged research pertaining to lake problems. At the annual meeting in 1945, members asked that proper authorities be contacted and an effort made to have natural gas pipelines extended to cottage areas. The association officers keep in contact the year around with matters affecting the interests of summer residents.

The Okoboji Protective association offers a reward of $50 to anyone who furnishes information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons who break into member properties. This was last paid when a cottage thievery ring was broken up and all members convicted.

The Spirit Lake Protective and Improvement association flourished for some years, with almost identical aims as that on the Okobojis.

The Iowa Great Lakes association is made up of commercial clubs in Estherville, Spencer, Spirit Lake, Arnolds Park, and Milford. Unlike the other two, which have no commercial interests, the Great Lakes association is for the sole purpose of promotion for the lake region. It has memberships outside the clubs and advertises extensively.

The association has a summer secretary who aids vacationers in locating cottages and rooms. Its records are kept up to date daily. The association furnishes information by letter and advertises by radio, newspapers, and billboards. It supplies thousands of advertising folders and gives general co-operation to all commercial interests in the lakes area after fulfulling its chief aim of making welcome the thousands who are drawn here for vacations. A new folder was to be issued in the spring of 1946. The office is at Arnolds Park.

There is an active Rotary club in Spirit Lake, which vacationers attend and at which outstanding lakes visitors are speakers and guests.

There is also an active Business and Professional Women's club in Spirit Lake, which invites visiting members to attend its meetings and invites important vacationers to speak.

The Spirit Lake Commercial club is the organization that puts out the welcome mat in that town. It has a large year-around program that includes the 4-H Club Congress for the county's young farmers, each fall. This is held in late August and attracts many lake visitors. The livestock exhibits are always outstanding, the girls' project exhibits are always on a par with larger fairs, and the entertainment is good. The show ends with a livestock sale each year.

The Okoboji Lakes Commercial club membership lies within the Arnolds Park-Okoboji region. It promotes the general business interests in the Okoboji lakes area, and annually provides fireworks for the Fourth of July holidays, and special events.

All of the lake region towns have Boy Scout troops. The State Conservation Commission has turned the Mini-Wakan state park into a camping park and provides facilities for a several weeks' camping period for the Scouts of this area. Summer visitors are also allowed to attend the camp.

Arnolds Park and Okoboji have no fraternal organizations. There is an American Legion post and an American Legion Auxiliary unit. The Okoboji Lakes Legion post, in co-operation with posts in the surrounding area, entertained the Iowa convention in 1940.

The towns have the usual variety of churches and church organizations. Fraternal organizations are represented, except the Knights of Columbus. There are eight large consolidated high schools in the county.

Moonlight

Pillsbury's point from Des Moines beach.

"Pillsbury's point . . . ."

Pillsbury's Point is Actually Man-Made Beautiful Lake Landmark

Pillsbury's point, — that great triangle of land jutting out into the blue of West Okoboji lake, almost like the prow of a ship, has stood sentinel through the centuries since the great glacier receded and left behind it the pools of clear, cold water called lakes by the men who found them there.

Probably no name is so familiar nor sight so remembered by those who visit the lake region. Pillsbury's point has somehow stood as a symbol of West Okoboji lake — that kindly blue lake of sparkling encouragement, deep friendliness, and steady inspiration for those who gaze upon its wide expanses day after day, year after year. Perhaps, too, it pleases the eye of God, who put it there to gaze upon century after century.

Standing staunch and constant before the raging northwest winds that howl down across the miles of open water and hurl angry waves upon its base; green and protective and majestic slumbering in the sun as the gentle waves kiss the rocks at its feet; Pillsbury's point stands out above all things material, an eternal sentry set apart from the petty things of men.

And yet, part of the very grandeur of Pillsbury's point, was made by man. Few there are who know that once upon a time, when white men first came to these shores, the stately headland was jagged, great holes had been washed in its sides, and it wasn't a thing of beauty without peer.

It's banks were steep and little brush could cling to the sides to cover the scars made by pounding waves. The butte-like top was covered with a rank growth of brush, burdocks, and weeds. It held no beckoning invitation then to walk to its top and enjoy the things to be seen from that natural stage.

To the grove of young trees that sprung up behind its rugged prow, there came a family and a cabin was built in the shelter. But the coming of a family was of no moment, measured by the space of eternity out of which grew the lofty promontory.

One Sunday afternoon, when the water was looked into the depths and shallows, there came the last Indian war cry to echo across the stillness. The family was left behind, the blood of life staining the deep snows of the winter, the yoked oxen left to die alone.

Came soldiers to spend a night and bury the dead. Came other settlers to mend the broken hope. And life went on. Wind and rain beat upon the tapering blunted

Beauty

Pillsbury's point—majestic headland jutting out into the lake. Above from the amusement park, so familiar to all who visit West Okoboji lake. The umbrella tree is especially beautiful from many angles.

end of the guardian sentry. There came a second family. The house of terror became a home again. Children gambled about the woods and built the distant caps arising high above the waves. Perhaps they said proudly they were pilots of a huge ship putting out to sea.

Until their dreams in 1884 the Rev. Samuel Pillsbury and his wife made their home in the log house. The great natural hill was thus the first inhabited — Pillsbury's point.

Upon the death of the pioneer preacher, the homestead became the property of the Okoboji South Park company. It was then that the idea of a natural stage overlooking the lake region and the surrounding scenery was first conceived.

The company, probably between 1890 and 1895, set a group of men to work repairing the ravages of time. The great holes in the sides of the promontory were mended with rocks floated in on great rafters. The scars of the ages were healed with a foundation that extended for many feet under water where shifting waves and merciless pushes of ice would have no further chance to wear away the guardian of the blue inland sea.

Great beds of sod were cut from a pasture and placed upon the level tablehead and sides, above the rocks. The burdocks and weeds were cleared away by young men of the community who worked many days to produce the soulful inviting beauty that is now a joy to all who see.

A terrace was made in the steep bank by those who worked, a narrow path was built along the sides for slow and thoughtful tread, the beauty was too great for hurried glances and quickened steps.

The new beauty that had been created by man, lifting nature's work to great dignity, was then given to the great Giant of Iowa for a place to go for rest and to feast the soul. Back a bit from the point, his own reality sat and there sprung up one of the summer colonies, one of the first.

Low Water

A picture from 1902 shows the lake then was very low and reeds were growing along the rocks of the point. Notice pointed rock, near foreground. It may be seen in many pictures.

Givens' Beach

Early in the century there was a bench along the fence in front of Judge Josiah Givens' summer home, at the approach to Pillsbury's point. Those who walked to the point often stopped for a chat or a rest on his bench.

Pillsbury*s point, according to land records, extends half-way down the shore toward the south end of the lake. The owners gave the point itself, a small park along the south of the triangle, and a strip along the waterline to Iowa people for all time. Along Sunset beach the cottage owners control only the property east of their sidewalks, that on the west is part of the Pillsbury's point gift to the state, as far south as the beautiful rustic footbridge constructed in about 1934 by the CCC workmen. They, at the time, built some stone benches on the point and made a few repairs to the point and the footpaths leading to it.

The great rock barrier that underlies Pillsbury's point must have been flung there by giants at play. The rocks reach far into the lake and it is said they reach across the bay to connect with those that form Fort Dodge point on the north.

Maybe, once in the long, long ago, there was only a narrow channel between, or no channel at all, and the bay in front of Arnold's park was a lake. It is certain that many years before white people first came, there were trees growing on what is now a long reef of rocks flung wantonly about, for the gray ghosts were there when white men came.

Windy Day

A view from the rocks of Pillsbury's point on a rough day. Looking northwest. Grove shown in center is The Inn.

Rocks

Pictures taken as late as 1898 showed the gaunt remains of large trees that once grew on the reef northwest of the point.

Those boulders are huge as automobiles; some flat enough to be a mermaid's table or dancing floor; some with queer prehistoric writings or imprints of ancient animals; some round and worn by the moving of the grinding glacier. Except for a brief season now and then in the roll of the years, they are hidden at the feet of the sentinel of the Okoboji's — Pillsbury's point.

Footpath

The pathways leading to the top of the point, and the large and lovely trees, makes strolling there a top pleasure in the lake region.

"The story of Des Moines beach . . . ."

Supreme Court Justice First to Build Summer Cottage on West Okoboji

The story of Des Moines beach, and the first cottages on the lakes, is interesting. Now that there are hundreds of cottages lining the lakeshores on the Okobojis, it is interesting to wonder which one was first, who started the parade, and something about beach developments.

According to the best information available from the old-timers, Judge Josiah Given of Des Moines, then a member of the Iowa Supreme court, built the first cottage on West Okoboji lake and in the lake region. It may have been built and occupied in the summer of 1885, and was just a one-room all-purpose cottage on what then became known as Given's point at the east end of Des Moines beach in the town of Okoboji. The original structure is still a part of a summer cottage there.

Milton J. Smith owned much of the property between the Okoboji bridge and Dixon's beach, and supposedly platted the "Okoboji Park" section in 1885. That comprised the area now known as Fort Dodge point, Des Moines beach, and the property to the bridge. Much of it is still owned by his heirs, but the lakeshore is lined with cottages built on the orignial plat.

Records show that the "Okoboji Park" plat was filed in the county courthouse in July, 1887. R. A. Smith, brother of the property owner, wrote in his history that the wild oak-grown area was platted two years earlier. The descrepancy may be in the fact that there was seldom any rush to record transfers in those days. The history also states that the George Dimmitt cottage, "Seven Gables" was first. But those who remember the building of those first cottages declare the Given cottage was first. They explain that by the fact that the Dimmitt cottage was large and pretentious for the time, and that R. A. Smith may not have classified the Given building as a "cottage."

Milton J. Smith and wife transferred Lot. No. 1, Block K., of Okoboji Park to Eliabeth A. Given, Aug. 6, 1889, although it is generally conceded and recorded in R. A. Smith's history, that he bought the first lot sold in the new development. Again, the explanation, is failure to record the transfer immediately after the sale.

The Given cottage and site was sold to William A. McHenry of Denison, by Josiah Given and Elizabeth Given, July 28, 1894, and at that time the Given family moved across the bay to Pillsbury's point and built the first real cottage on that side of the lake soon afterward.

The McHenry cottage was enlarged and named the "Merrymacks" and is still the summer home of the McHenry great-grandsons, George and Lee Seemann of Omaha.

The transfer of property from Milton J. Smith and wife to George M. Dimmitt of Des Moines, was recorded May 14, 1888, on Lot 6, Block M of Okoboji Park. It is supposed that the "Seven Gables" had been built prior to that. That property was, like the other, remodeled and modernized a time or two. It was sold July 25, 1919, to James Reany of Sheldon. He, in turn, sold to J. C. Campbell of Oklahoma City, Oct. 6, 1939. They rebuilt the cottage again and called it "John Nelle". It still does, however, have seven gables.

The remainder of that section of Des Moines beach has an interesting history and recalls names of people once important in the development of the lake region. Lot. No. 2, Block K, west of the Given property, was transferred to Samuel Mahon of Ottumwa, Aug 15, 1887. He sold to Mrs. Cynthia E. McDaniels, April 10, 1897. The remainder of the transfers show she sold to G. S. Igo and it remained in that family until March 1, 1921,. when it was purchased by Dan Hankens of Cherokee, who sold to Lloyd G. Smith July 7, 1932.

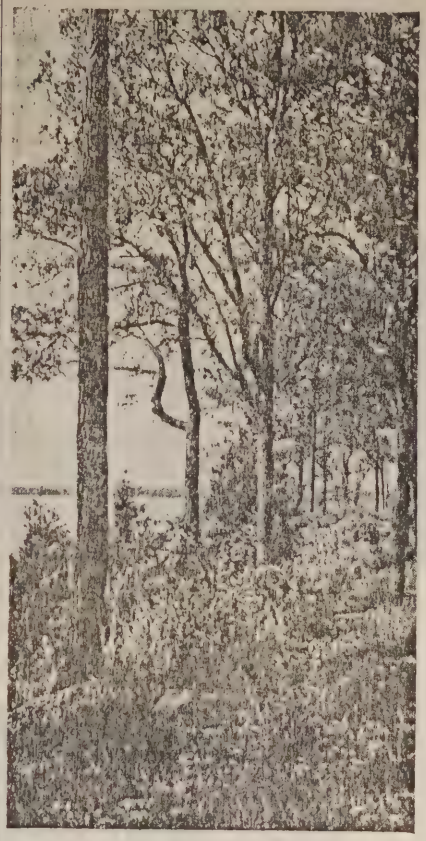
Lot No. 3, Block K, was transferred Aug. 15, 1887, to Allen Johnston of Ottumwa, who sold to O. B. Docksteader of Des Moines, April 24, 1894. He sold to George H. Phelps of Kingsley, May 16, 1914.

J. P. Connors, probably of Des Moines, bought Lot No. 4, Block K, and it was transferred Aug. 18, 1887. He sold to D. J. Pattee of Perry, June 26, 1889.

Lake Path

Along Des Moines beach in the fall, looking east along the footpath that serves as the main artery of travel.

Lake Path



Along Des Moines beach in the fall, looking west along the footpath.

It was held by him and his heirs, Ada Pattee Tyrrell, Martha Pattee Schaffer, and others, until its sale to W. F. Mitchell of Des Moines, March 16, 1925. It now belongs to Dr. H. J. Marshall of Des Moines.

Lot No. 5, Block K, was sold to S. J. Pattison, also probably of Des Moines, and the property was transferred Aug. 10, 1887. It changed hands numerous times to Frank P. Sawyer, to Charles H. Heath, to May Pattee Schaffer, to E. O. Stearns, to E. W. Bates, to John P. Schwartz, also of Des Moines, Aug. 19, 1935.

Block M, next west of the history-making first choice of cottage owners, is also interesting as seen on the county transfer register. Lot No. 1 was bought by Herman W. Merrill, address unknown, and now belongs to Dan Hankens of Cherokee. Lot No. 2, went to Jno. W. Edgerly, and sold to J. D. Spalding of Sioux City, now owned by his daughter, Mrs. Susan (Fred) White of Estherville.

Lot No. 3, went to Judge W. F. Conrad of Des Moines, and is now owned by L. G. Voorhees of Oklahoma City. Sam Green of Des Moines bought Lot No. 4, and it is now owned and occupied every season by his grandchildren, Sam and Fred Green and Mrs. Harlan Miller, all of Des Moines. Lot No. 5 was bought by B. C. and E. R. Ward of Des Moines and is now owned by A. O. Giltner of North Hollywood, Calif., formerly of Des Moines.

A great many places on the lake were platted at about the same time as the M. J. Smith property and until 1900. One of them, which enters into the story of the first cottages built, was a tract of 20.51 acres purchased by Kate Bird and Cara E. Curtis, of Douglas county, Nebraska, from Frederick M. Hubbell and wife of Des Moines. The deed was filed June 6, 1894, as of purchase Aug. 31, 1893.

The property is that known as the property of Col. S. S. Curtis, where he built a lavish summer home for his wife and daughters Lynda and Carita (Cara?), supposedly in 1895. The property was a block lying on both sides of the new Milwaukee railroad right-of-way, south of the grade. He had it platted as Lynhurst, the name given to his lakeside villa, honoring his daughter, and the plat recorded in 1903. Until then, it was assumed, he held the property on all sides of him to prevent encroachment in his heavily wooded summer estate.

The Curtis family came here only a few years, about six or so, and then rented their place. Colonel Curtis died in 1909 and his heirs sold to the late M. Goltry, then of Alta, Iowa. At the time Carita was Mrs. Dimon Byrd of New York City and Lynda was an artist in Chicago.

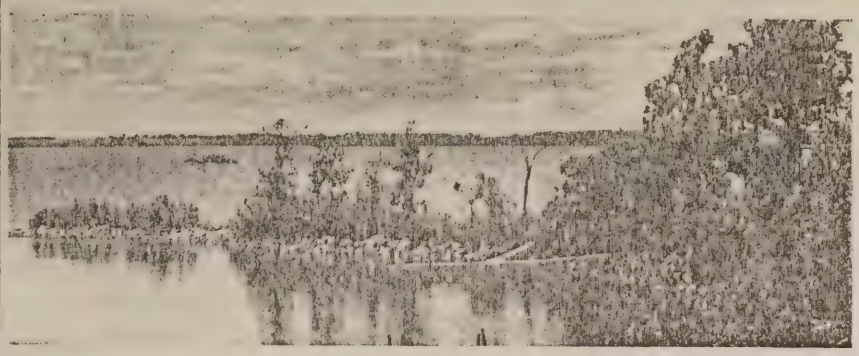
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gibson rented the property in 1909 and for many years thereafter it was an inn for sportsmen and hunters, and re-named "The Villa." Mrs. Gibson was far-famed as a good cook and her small summer hotel was always crowded. After some years a few cottages were built on lots near and the underbrush was cleared away up to the main highway. At present, the entire area is built up with cottages and permanent residences.

Mr. and Mrs. Goltry came here in 1920 to make "The Villa" their home. Some of the orignial furnishings were still in place, walnut framed mirrors, a walnut bed believed to be 150 years old, walnut tables, and other elaborate furnishings for 1895.

"The Villa," as almost all other places, has been many times remodeled. The orignial building is now the "Jumbo" cottage on a site near the original location and the Goltry summer home, still open to summer guests, is on the first site. Cottages operated in connection will accommodate many persons.

The street leading from Highway 71, only a wagon road when the Curtis family was here, to The Villa, is named Carita street, in honor of the second daughter.

Rocky Point

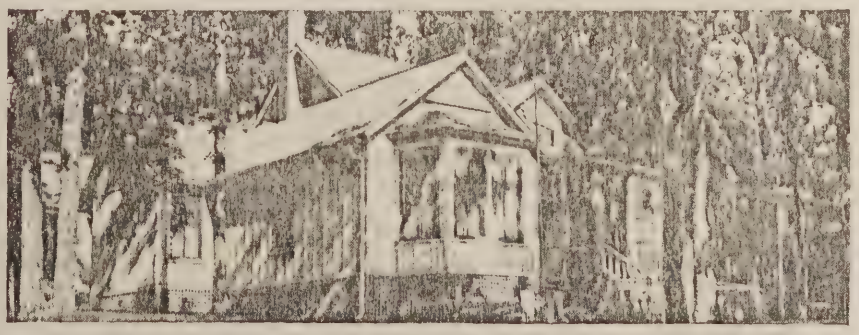


Fort Dodge point is at the west end of Des Moines beach. Williamz picture.

Early Cottage

McHenry's point is at the east end of Des Moines beach. The McHenry cottage was one of the first built and has been rebuilt many times.

First Cottage



The first cottage built on the lakes, as it looks today. It was known for many years as the "Seven Gables" and was a landmark of the area.

"The Inn hotel isn't . . . ."

Rambling Inn Hotel Had Brilliant Career In Early Days of Century

The Inn hotel isn't just a hotel, a place for people to spend the night or a vacation away from home. Nor is it the rambling, somewhat shabby, home-like structure with long cool porches, on Dixon's beach. It is an institution, part of the design and tapestry of the life that is woven around the blue waters of West Okoboji lake.

Since childhood, I have known The Inn. It holds many and varied memories — that grand place where other little girls in party dresses and reribboned pigtails danced at afternoon parties every Wednesday; evenings when I was permitted to go across the lake on the "Okoboji" and stay until intermission to watch the dancers in the old pavilion where the water lapped at the sands underneath.

There was an oriental shop with an air of mystery and hundreds of things to covet for one's own, and a marvelous emerald necklace to remember Mr. Sadie by. There were Sunday afternoon concerts by the orchestra, up in the sun room and music for meals in the dining room. There were days in early spring and late fall when a walk along the lakeshore to The Inn was the grandest fun of all.

In later years, I've often stopped with Mrs. S. T. Callender, better known as Aunt Sarah, on the rustic bench outside her cottage while her roly poly puppies tumbled at our feet. From there, it was an enchanting walk down the long porch to the office to visit a bit with Mrs. Mary W. Jaquith, whom many generations have called Aunt Polly.

Aunt Sarah through my reporting years has been the one to consult about the most recent party in the tearoom. Aunt Polly always knows who's there and which one is a name for the list of famous ones registered at The Inn.

The two sisters have guided the destinies of The Inn since the summer of 1903. Then they took over for only one season — "not only but positively", says Aunt Polly. They purchased the hotel in 1910 and the summer of 1941 was their thirty-eighth.

Says Aunt Polly, "You probably don't know anyone who is old enough to remember how the dances were held in the dining room (and was it hot?) to the music of a four-piece Italian orchestra. Then came the dance pavilion on the lakeshore with still more rooms above — and weren't the dances lovely and didn't Professor Salmunder and his orchestra play the loveliest waltzes? Ask anyone over 60 and they will bear me out."

What romance The Inn has! And how much fun it is to hear them tell it — these two grand sisters. "The young people in those days did not want to dash madly from one dance hall to another. I can remember with what shocked disdain I heard the first suggestion of 10-cent dances. Impossible! This was not the Bowery!" It is Aunt Polly continuing to add to my story.

"Alas, how the mighty have fallen! But I still like to think of the days when The Inn docks were filled with launches and when the early steamboat brought its load of young people from around the lake to say nothing of mamma and the younger children. The latter always left on the "intermission boat" and then the dancing really became a serious matter. I wonder if any of the old boat men remember that Mrs. Callender used to send them down a tray of sandwiches as part payment for the annoyance with launches that would not tie to other docks . . . "

But why not let Aunt Polly go on with the story? "Then there were the solo dancers. Who now remembers Conrad Nagle and Evelyn Veatch and Jimmy Dyrenforth and Frances Ross! Don't forget the children's dances on Wednesday afternoon. Weren't those youngsters adorable? And how they begged us to put the Big Folks off the floor so they could have "more room." Didn't the Big Folks fume about the children daning the first three dances in the evening? I'll say they did . . ."

Another story of The Inn is incomplete, for Aunt Polly says only "I'd like to tell you a little of how the motley crew of divorcees from Sioux Falls — the Reno of that day — gave cosmopolitan flower to our standardized midwest contingent."

Taking over management of The Inn was supposedly a vacation for the two sisters but they sigh now and wonder why they ever thought it was a vacation. It is hard to learn of their earlier days, both are so modest about their accomplishment. However, Mrs. Jaquith had a studio in Des Moines and taught painting. Her home and studio had just burned. Mrs. Callender's husband was in ill health and she was manager of The Business Woman's club in Des Moines. Their father, Mr. Hutchins, was just returned from the Philippines in ill health. So—they decided a vacation at the lakes operating the hotel was the thing. That was nearly forty years ago, and every spring finds them back again at The Inn, although many of those dears ones have slipped away meantime.

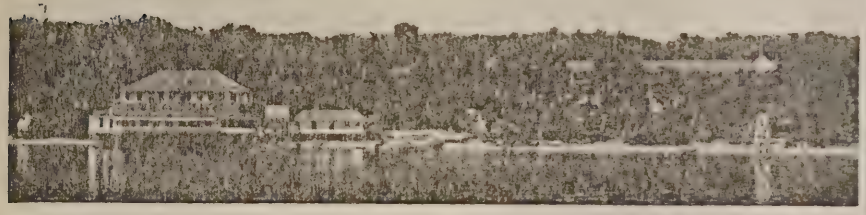
They bought the hotel in 1910 and finished paying for it in 1922. At that time they sold it to Judge J. D. Kennedy of Sioux City but he did not live to carry out his magnificent plans to lift The Inn from the shabby, homey old place to a place as a "gorgeous dream of which all Iowa would be proud," says Aunt Polly.

The Inn's history is full of human interest and feature stories, its owners recall, and admit a little sadly that "it is a shame we did not keep a diary, from which to write a best-seller "Annals of Our Old Inn."

Both of the sisters cautioned me that The Inn was the dream of J. A. Beck, of Fairfield, who saw a great resort on Dixon's beach and started it with a hotel. He promised Mrs. Beck he would build only twelve rooms and then built twenty-four and found them too few, for the summer of 1897.

Guests went to the farmhouse for meals and often had to hunt the hotel-keeper in the field, to pay the bills. Mr. and Mrs. George Davis of Fairfield lived in the farmhouse and helped with the hotel management then. Mrs. Davis was

Waterfront At The Inn



Williamz picture of The Inn lakefront as it was from about 1900 to 1930.

a marvelous cook and guests were reluctant to leave. The old house was removed from its original site in the 1920's and moved to "The Inn road" down near Highway 71.

Mr. Beck was so enthused with the first summer's business that he built the rest of the main building and a dining room and kitchen. The first section of the hotel was on the east of two mound-like knolls. In 1898, Mr. Beck built the second section over the west knoll, the main part of the building as it has stood every since.

Aunt Polly's story returned me to my own memories. I don't remember Professor Salmunder who playd such "lovely waltzes" but I do remember Ainsworth's orchestra of The Inn, with Graham's at Arnold's pavilion and dance nights alternating between the two and Manhattan, and no dances on Sunday night. Dancing always stopped promptly at midnight and the boat took young folks to homes and hotels. Mercy me! Dance tickets cost $1 per night and the program was usually about twenty dances.

Intermission was the grand event when everyone crowded into the little ice cream parlor to sip sodas and fancy sundaes, with "cokes" still in the future. The oriental shop was jammed with the women who wanted just to touch the lovely things and smell the incense. Those going home jostled onto the dock for the "intermission boat" home.

Many traditions have grown up around The Inn. Many families of children have been summer-reared at The Inn. It is a favorite for wedding trips. And there are those who have eloped from its shelter and mama's supervision.

For many year The Inn sponsored a swimming meet that drew hundreds of people to The Inn beach and the winners to the dining room next night for a chicken supper.

The Emancipation ball was started at The Inn as a Red Cross entertainment during World War I. It was a contribution of the Negro help at The Inn. It was held every year and became the high point of the social season, a ball and what a ball! Only, the white folks went as onlookers and the dusky cakewalk artists did all of the dancing, the women in evening gowns saved for a year to wear and the gentlemen strutting their stuff aplenty. After the pavilion was wrecked, the ball was moved over to Arnolds Park and still continues.

Fire of unknown origin leveled the dining room of the old hotel and took with it many treasures sent by friends for the quiet old building with its traditions of perfect service by perfect serving men. The fire was most spectacular, could be seen for miles around, and brought all fire-fighting equipment from nearby towns. It broke out about 7:45 Wednesday evening, Sept. 26, 1934, in a room over the kitchens that was occupied by a young Negro woman who had remained to aid in packing.

Spread of the fire to the main building was prevented by almost miraculous work by the fire departments. They all conceded that once it got into the framework, the place would burn like match sticks. Fire was stopped on the long porches and the sun room and a portion of the Callender-Jaquith cottage was saved.

Damage was estimated at about $25,000 and included linens, silver, valuable brassware and ornaments, and all of the equipment. The laundry equipment was also destroyed. The wind was from the lake that night, a factor that greatly aided in control of the fire.

It was several years, the owners admit, before they stopped looking for something that had burned, only to remember it was gone after starting to look.

The Inn garage was converted into a new tearoom and serves as well or better than the old building. The laundry was incorporated into the quarters for the help, and everything went along in the same groove as it had before the fire.

At the courthouse in Spirit Lake, I sought old records about the property there. It was a part of the Dr. Isaac H. Harriott claim and he was buried on a knoll behind what is now The Inn, when his father came here. It was then called Maple Grove because there were many maple trees there.

Dr. Harriott's father made no attempt to hold his property and the old records show a United States patent was issued to Daniel Bennett Oct. 13, 1858 for 187.99 acres. The property apparently had been unclaimed in the interim. The beach became known as Bennett's.

Aaron Dixon, records show, was deeded the property April 13, 1867, and lived there many years. A contract recorded Sept. 15, 1873, showed that Dixon agreed to sell 187.99 acres to J. H. Todd and O. H. Baker of Kossuth county and J. H. Lozier and Isaac Garmore of Webster county for $5,000. The terms of the contract were probably not met for a deed recorded Aug. 16, 1882, was from Dixon and his wife to M. V. Nichols of Mitchell county for the sum of $9,400, including all dowry and homestead rights.

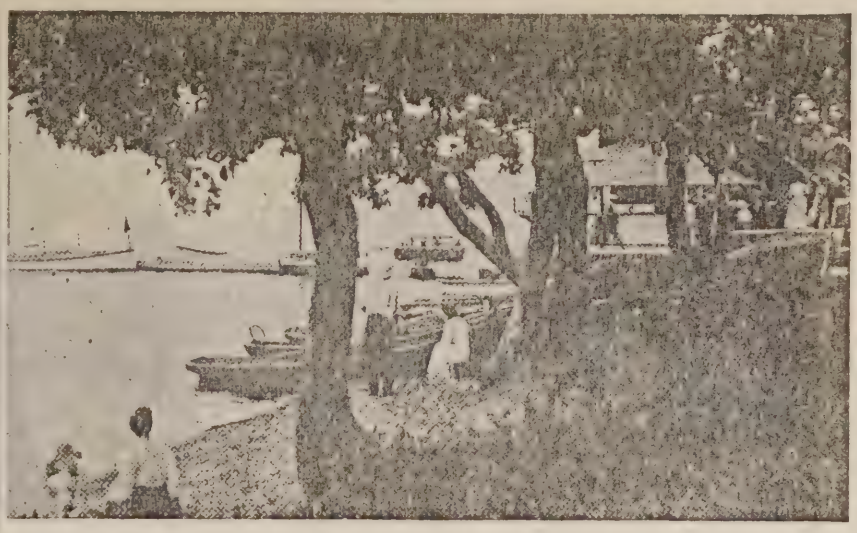
The transaction is mentioned in R. A. Smith's history as a sale to the railroad company that proposed to make a resort there. The plan fell through upon the death of an official.

Third transfer was from Nichols to Aden A. Haskell of Polk county, Nov. 28, 1892. Meantime there had been a few campers on the beach. It was at this time that Mr. Beck became interested and he bought a half-interest from Haskell Oct. 19, 1893, after the latter had platted the lakeshore as Haskell and Smith's addition. Beck got the deed for the remaining half on Aug. 14, 1897.

Probably not all of the orignial 187.99 acres was involved in the deal with Beck as lots were later sold in what was an extension of Okoboji park, platted in 1885 by M. J. Smith who then owned the property now including Des Moines beach.

The Inn is now a part of the incorporated town of Okoboji. It has a summer postoffice and faces Lakeshore drive, a pretty name given a meandering road that once passed the hotel on the lake side and is now a promenade. A year-around road runs behind the hotel and up the lakeshore to connect with High-

1905 Scene At The Inn



Lake front scene at The Inn, 1905.

way 9 at Triboji beach, from Highway 71 at East Okoboji lake, at the Okoboji bridge.

Old, and shabby but like the grand old homes that are loved, The Inn goes on. But — I'm wondering — would The Inn have been the same today — without Aunt Polly and Aunt Sarah at the helm?

(Note: About 2:30 p.m. Oct. 5, 1944, Mrs. Jaquith awoke from an afternoon nap to find the curtains at the window near her daybed, were burning. Mrs. Callender was outside in the garden. A colored boy who had remained to aid the women with post-season work, tried to extinguish the flames with a hose from the hotel. Mrs. Jaquith was unable to summon help by telephone, presumably because the wires had burned in two.

(Charlie Henderson, the boy, drove to the Okoboji store for help and both the Okoboji and Arnolds Park fire companies responded. They were unable to save anything. Irreplacable keepsakes, several valuable oil paintings and other heirlooms and all personal property were destroyed.

(Only that morning the two women had been in Spirit Lake and completed arrangements to sell the Inn property to A. R. Johnson, theater owner and manager, of Sioux Falls, S. Dak. In the sale, they had reserved The Inn cottage, as their home had been known for years. After the fire, they moved into the St. Cecelia cottage between the hotel and Rainbow room which Mrs. Callender had made into a popular tearoom by remodelling the big garage, after the dining room fire. They gave possession of the hotel and its property in May, 1945, and Mr. Johnson operated the hotel in the summer of 1945. The two women have established their home in the St. Margaret cottage around the bend from The Inn.)

At The Inn Dock

The Queen docking at The Inn is a familiar sight, along with the jagged tree. Williamz picture.

The Inn Hotel

Heavy burr oak shade trees now block a complete view of The Inn.

"The flip of a coin . . . ."

First Cottages at Hayward's Bay Area Built as Early as 1894

The flip of a coin decided which site on Hayward's bay of West Okoboji lake should be used for the first cottage. The coin was flipped in about 1894, according to Dr. William McClung Evans of Cedar Rapids, who owns that first cottage.

William Hayward and Harry Buck, both of Spirit Lake, were partners. They bought a large piece of land, on the bay, from a Mrs. Love of Chicago. It was just ordinary farm land.

The men laid out Hayward's bay and flipped a coin to see which one should take the choicest lot and which the second best. Three lots were chosen as the best and three cottages built. They overlooked the bay from the east and were located on a knoll somewhat back from the lakeshore and among a growth of very old and very beautiful burr oak trees.

Buck's cottage was built in 1895 and occupied that summer. The Hayward and the third cottage went up the same summer and were also occupied. A short ways south was a fourth cottage, built in 1895 on a lot purchased in 1894 by Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Welton.

It was while Rev. Dr. Evans was pastor of the Presbyterian church at Grand Junction that he became acquainted with the Hillman family and knew of the "Hawkeye club." It was the custom of its members to come to these lakes to fish. They always took home large quantities of fish. At that time, they camped on Dixon's beach. Dr. Evans began to take a keen interest in the place the fish came from.

In 1894, when he was pastor of the Estherville Presbyterian church, Dr. Evans came over to have a look. He rode to Spirit Lake on the train and to Arnolds Park from Spirit Lake, on the train. By passenger boat he went to Dixon's beach and found Hillman's in their tent. He was well pleased with what he saw, and decided then to spend vacations at Okoboji.

Dr. Evans spent his forty-sixth consecutive summer vacation at the lakes

Once Familiar Scene

Hayward's bay was little but a wide sandy beach in its early days. The store was the corner grocery for the north end of the lake area. Housewives came in boats to shop. A. M. Johnson, Jr., was its proprietor. Part of the store building was incorporated into a cottage now near this site.

in 1941. After leaving here in 1894, he heard through a parishioner of Hayward and Buck and the new development. In 1896, he persuaded Buck to let him occupy his cottage for a period, for rent. The men agreed upon a price and the Evans family was installed in the cottage. The previous summer had been spent in a tent at the old chautauqua grounds on East Okoboji lake at Spirit Lake.

The new location delighted the Evans family so much they wanted to stay so badly that Mr. Buck sold his cottage to the Presbyterian minister. It has been remodeled several times but remains the homey cottage of the early-day type with no interior walls and finishing.

There are twenty-odd giant burr oaks on the lot which runs all the way from the road to the lakeshore, trees that are hard to believe without seeing them, they are so very big for burr oak trees.

When Dr. Evans started coming to the lake, the road to the bay had just been opened and was still full of stumps. Launches were the popular and most pleasant method of travel, and everyone at Hayward's bay had a horse for overland trips. At one time there were eight horses in one barn there. It was a day's drive to Estherville and trips weren't made for the fun of driving.

Tom Francis of Spirit Lake built many of the cottages at the early Hayward's bay colony. A small store was built as the colony grew and for many years there was a postoffice there. Mrs. Hayward was the first postmistress and kept the mail at her cottage. It was dispatched through Camp Leon, still the Hillman location, a short ways south, by horse and buggy to Spirit Lake.

The Hayward's bay store has considerable of a history. It was a popular place, the only place in miles where groceries could be purchased by the cottagers, and did a thriving business for many years. It was probably started by Hayward. For three or four years it was operated by A. M. Johnson, Jr., of Spirit Lake, and for two years was operated by Earl, Harry, and Percy Godden of Emmetsburg. Harry Godden was then postmaster.

When roads finally became good enough to travel on and cars came into general use, the little store was no longer a necessity and was discontinued. The building was made into cottages.

A. M. Johnson of Spirit Lake, for a half century one of the county's leading merchants, bought one of the first lots on the bay. His was just east of the present John P. Wallace cottage and he paid $50 for it. The promoters promised Mr. Johnson a lot free, if he would build that year. He built, and lived there many years. The cottage burned and the site was sold.

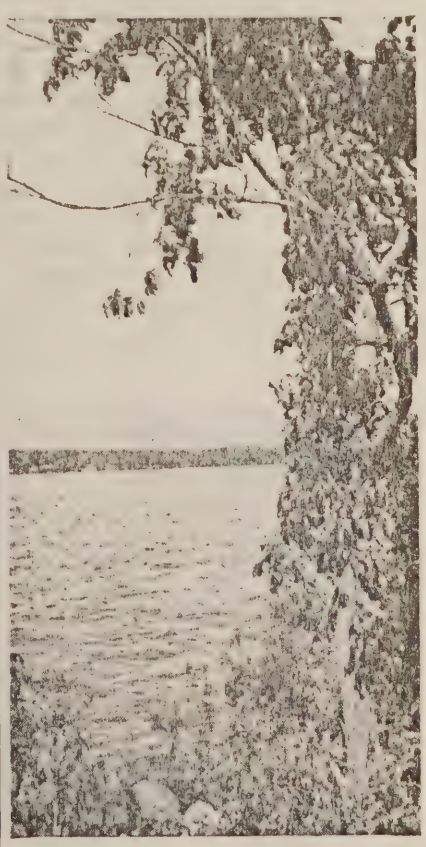
Among other names familiar to the Hayward's bay region are the Goddens, Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Godden spent thirty-eight years there before their deaths and the property is now held by their children. Their dock was a steamboat landing from the time it was built. When the Goddens first came to the lake, it was a two-day trip from Emmetsburg. They brought their launch from there on a wagon.

Charles Peterson, an attorney for the Rock Island railroad, and Judge Ben Birdsall, later a member of congress, were from Clarion and fast friends. They bought adjoining lots on the north shore of the bay and built identical cottages, "Twin Gables". Neither family now owns the places.

The Wohlenbergs of Holstein, the Fairbanks' of Clarion, the Heminways, the Lovelands—all were and some still are summer residents there.

The Omaha colony on Pike's point was going good when the Hayward's bay region began to develop. Dr. Evans and Mr. Johnson recall that the colony was founded in 1892 and built around an exclusive club house. Cottages there had no kitchens and dining rooms, as everyone dined at the club.

West Okoboji



North from Pillsbury's point.

"As the groves . . . ."

Early Methodist Camp Meetings Grew; Own Large Area on West Lake

As the groves were God's first temples, so has one of the beautiful groves on West Okoboji been set aside for a place of worship. That grove is now known as the Methodist Camp Grounds.

The history of the Methodist Camp meetings and the camp itself are linked with the founding of this northwest Iowa territory.

Methodist camp meetings were started in this lake region as an institution as early as 1879 when the first one was held on Pillsbury's point. It was held there for a number of years. Later such meetings were conducted on Dixon's beach and once for a series of years on the old chautauqua grounds on East Okoboji lake at Spirit Lake, now the Fred Gilbert Park.

In about 1914, camp meeting was held at Steven's beach in Arnolds Park. It was at that session that the Methodists of northwest Iowa considered a permanent organization and meeting place. A committee was appointed to investigate possible sites and buy a locatoin.

Two sites were offered and considered. One was east of Camp Foster on East Okoboji lake, a part of the Peter LaDoux farm and before that the claim of Joel Howe. The second site was a portion of the Brownell farm at the north end of West Okoboji. The latter site was chosen and an option was taken on forty acres. The price was $15,000.

Immediately the Methodist Camp Meeting association, then in charge of the annual sessions, had the land platted and offered for sale at sums low enough to premit preachers to own property at the new camp site. Enough lots were sold to permit the entire purchase price to be paid March 1, 1915.

A large wooden tabernacle was erected at a cost of $2,500 on a knoll overlooking the camp grounds and the lake. The first camp meeting on the new site was held in the building in 1915. That same year a store was built to care for the needs of visitors. Later, a 17-room hotel was built over the store and dining hall, known as Asbury hall in honor of the late Bishop Francis Asbury.

Additions and improvements include the Nissen Memorial cottage, now a double dormitory-cottage, erected in 1921 in honor of the Rev. H. C. Nissen and family who were killed in an automobile accident at Milford in 1920; the Deaconess cottage, erected to provide free lodging for deaconesses who visit the camp; the Epworth League hall, a young people's club building; and the White cross building, camp hospital.

First Tabernacle

The original tabernacle, destroyed by windstorn.

A twister practically destroyed the tabernacle Sept. 30, 1926, when it swooped down onto the hilltop at the camp. A new brick building was started at once on the same site and was completed at a cost of $8,000 in time for the 1927 camp activities. It has since then been considerably improved with screened windows and doors, and other conveniences.

Dr. D. A. MacBurney, then superintendent of this district, was the father of the present camp meeting organization. It was through his efforts and plans that the camp site was purchased and the annual gathering of Methodists made permanent.

According to the original plan, only lot owners were members of the association. In the first years, meetings were restricted to Methodist groups. Later the oottage area was opened to anyone wishing a summer place there, and the tabernacle was made available to all groups on a plan similar to that of the Lake Geneva conference.

The camp meeting has now evolved into the annual seven-day Lake Okoboji Bible conference. International church leaders of Methodism and other religious groups come from the entire midwest for the conference which is directed by the trustees of the Methodist Camp Grounds and a like number from the membership of the Northwest Iowa Methodist conference.

It is recalled that the original board of trustees in charge of choosing a permanent site included Dr. MacBurney, Dr. O. M. Bond, the Rev. F. P. Quick, the Rev. C. L. Fillebrown, the Rev. Edgar Hammerle, and A. B. Snyder. The latter donated the beautiful stone arch at the public pier.

Summer activities form a complete program from early until late. The Queen Esther societies have a camp and so do the Standard Bearers. There is a statewide gathering of Epworth League mem-

Present Tabernacle

Second tabernacle.

bers for a weeks' institute. The number registered is usually around 800. There are always smaller groups such as Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and there is a regular worship service every Sunday of the season.

"Play day," a district women's club outing originated in 1926 by Mrs. Clarence Foley of Sanborn and the Methodist Camp, was traditional for a number of years but has now been discontinued. The annual Dickinson County Farm Bureau picnic and program is usually held there each June. For a time the days' events also included graduation exercises for eighth graders of the county schools.

The total investment in the Methodist Camp is well over $125,000, it is estimated. There are some 150 cottages on the grounds in addition to the association buildings, with parks, roads, and other community improvements. There is a United States postoffice at the hotel every summer, served out of Spirit Lake. All camp business is handled by a board of trustees.

The location of the Methodist Camp is among those mentioned in the early history of the lake region. First mention of the site is that of Josiah T. Tuttle and his wife Elizabeth L., who took a homestead in Marble Grove farm in 1868. They also had a "tree claim" on the property that is now the Methodist camp and lived there from June to early fall of 1868.

Dr. E. L. Brownell, pioneer doctor and druggist at Spirit Lake, owned the property many years. It was believed that it was a part of the Eber Palmer homestead. The Methodist group purchased the site from the Brownell estate and retained the name of Brownell's beach for the lake front of the camp.

On a plot immediately south of the camp there is now a music colony established some years ago by Morningside college for its summer school of music. The camp includes an assembly hall, practice cabins, and a larger headquarters building on the lakeshore. The school is conducted annually by Prof. Paul MacCollin and Prof. Leo Kucinski of the Morningside school of music. They and the summer students furnish music for the Methodist Bible conference and are also in demand as entertainers at some of the large gatherings at the lake during the summer.

Camp Road

Most familiar scene at the Methodist Camp Grounds, approaching the hotel (right) and circle drive from the north. Building at right built for information stand and incidental use. Picture about 1925.

"When young Robert . . . ."
Once Elite Manhattan Hotel Built On Shore of Madison's Claim

When young Robert Madison of Mattheson came from Delaware county with the James Mattock family in July or August, 1856, to select a site for his parents a new home, it is generally supposed he chose a large grove on the west side of the lake, now Manhattan beach and adjoining property.

Summer resorts sprung up every here and there during the late years of the old century after the mid-west discovered that nature had provided them a summer playground with unsurpassed beauties.

It was in 1893 that D. B. Lyon of Des Moines visioned a summer resort on the Madison grove site. He purchased a tract of land that included the sandy point and about a mile of shoreline. Then he organized a joint stock company. The lots were platted and offered for sale.

Cottages were erected and a large building known as The Manhattan Beach hotel. It was a long, narrow building built over the sandbar. It was rather showy and a splendid example of the grandeur to which early day builders aspired.

Each hotel room had a view of the lake. The large dance pavilion was built

Toboggan And Hotel

The Manhattan Beach hotel, showing the boat house, toboggan, and dock. The ballroom was built over the sandbar, the part shown at the right. Picture 1902.

on a foundation against which the waves often pounded or lapped gently during high water. The large dining room, with a view of the lake for miles in either direction, was augmented by adequate kitchens. In addition, there was a refreshment parlor, a bowling alley, a large bath house and the ever-popular toboggan slide. And, of course, a boat house and large fleet of rowboats for hire.

Because the beach was so inaccessible, all the way across West Okoboji lake, the company bought the old steamer "Ben Lennox" and re-named her the "Manhattan." She was placed in service of the guests as transportation to and from trains at Arnolds Park. The boat was old and had to be taken off the lake by 1899.

The entire Manhattan venture was destined for failure from the start. It was too far from the railroad. The lots did not sell. The hotel did not pay. The company went into receivership.

As the lakes gained in popularity and water traffic became more dependable, the Manhattan beach venture was revived. This time it was on a less elaborate scale and the hotel became one of the most popular places on the lake.

Its popularity continued well into two decades during which The Manhattan and The Inn hotels vied for honors in large and smart patronage. The two hotels were distinctly stopping places for spenders and the entertainment was on that scale.

Dances were held tri-weekly in the large pavilion over the waves and were attended by the smart sets from around the lake. Dinner and evening clothes were the rule. Large crowds of smartly gowned women and well-dressed men thronged the pavilion and the wide porches. The refreshment parlors were filled and refilled each evening. The bowling alleys attracted a large number of players.

Manhattan Cottages

Cottages, completely modern, were erected on the Manhattan grounds. Retaining wall along the hotel's bowling alley may be seen in foreground beside the children's playground. The property is now owned by H. A. Ross of Des Moines.

John Valentine Eppel and Frederick Knight Logan, later to be known as the composers of "The Missouri Waltz" and other hits, were among the orchestra leaders at The Manhattan during the days of its glory. It is very probable that the popular "Missouri Waltz" was first played at the pavilion by Eppel's own orchestra.

Dancing contests were held and drew hundreds of spectators, who, as well as the dancers, were conveyed to and from their residences by the steamboats "Okoboji" and "The Queen." Dancing stopped at midnight.

The history of The Manhattan was interlaced with conventions and merrymaking. For a number of years the gayest event of the season was the gathering of the Iowa Pond of the Blue Goose, and other similar holiday convention groups.

Automobile traffic and easier access to the hotel worked against, rather than for, The Manhattan. Cottages were built by the hundred on all parts of West Okoboji lake and hotel patronage fell away in favor of summer-home holidays. Nightly dances, including Sundays, instituted at Arnolds Park, spelled the end for the fashionable tri-weekly dances across the lake.

In its last decade, there was a steady decline of the patronage of The Manhattan until it was almost deserted. The buildings lost much of their former glamour. The pavilion was all but abandoned after several attempts to re-introduce dancing. The long porches lined with rocking chairs were little used. The bowling alleys, bath house, toboggan, and boats all receded into the past and their very presence was unknown to many who visited the lakes annually.

In 1931, the hotel was remodeled for use as a night club and made a short last stand.

The Manhattan passed through many ownerships during its existence. At various times it was considered a possible summer home and playground for lodges or other organizations but each plan turned into a dud and the hotel remained on only as a memento of the glamorous past.

It was not until wrecking bars had torn into and leveled the famous old hotel, that Manhattan beach once more came into prominence in the lake region. That was in the spring of 1933 when two Des Moines men, H. A. Ross and W. H. Gordon, purchased the site and transformed it into a cottage colony.

The wide porches were first to be taken down, and then the wrecking crew tore away the main building itself, which covered a large area of ground. Twenty-five cottages were built on the site, arranged so that every cottage has a view of the lake. Flower gardens and other landscaping were arranged and a children's play park occupied the ground formerly under the old bowling alley. The cottages were opened in time for the July 4 holiday that year. Since then Mr.

Manhattan Beach

The wide sand beach that was the pride of the old hotel, as it was after the hotel was torn down. The building is a small recreation room at the end of the sandbar.

Gordon has sold his interests to Mr. Ross, who had formerly been a resident of Spirit Lake.

The cottage colony is one of the finest on the lake, and among the most popular. The cottages have fireplaces, wide porches, and lots of windows to entice the breezes that are fairly constant on the Manhattan point. There are playgrounds, picnic grounds, and a clubhouse on the sand spit. The beach is kept in excellent condition and is one of the finest in the lake region. Instead of the glamour and swank of the hotel's heyday, the Manhattan beach colony now emphasizes the restful quiet of the area. There are now about forty cottages on the tract.

Manhattan Hotel

Williamz' picture of The Manhattan a few years before it was wrecked.

"Mini-Do-ka, a spring . . . ."

Magic Spring Waters Once Pointed To Fashionable Lake Spa

Mini-do-ka, a spring of magic water that healed generations of sick Indians who made it a rendezvous for their ailing ones, became the white man's inheritance together with the beauties and opportunities of the north Iowa lake region.

The magic water, now a portion of the Egralharve estate, is located on the west shore of West Okoboji, two miles south of the northern end of the lake.

It is said the water from the mineral spring had been known for generations for its health-giving properties. The Indians, years before settlement of the whites, brought their sick to the spring for cure.

Great claims are made for the curative value of the spring water and hundreds of tired city folk as well as those from village and hamlet have come to the spring for relief from rheumatism and a host of other ills. The soil is identical with the Moor soil of Carlsbad and it had the advantage of ages of impregnation from the minerals of the springs that bubble through it.

Since 1891, the spring had been the property of the Badgerow family of Sioux City. The late Gordon R. Badgerow had visited the lakes and was greatly pleased with the water and scenery. He purchased 80 acres lying along the west shore of West Okoboji, from the Rev. Seymour Snyder, who had obtained it by homestead from the government in 1862. The Rev. Mr. Snyder had been a missionary preacher visiting the little groups of settlers scattered throughout northwestern Iowa, and ministering to spiritual needs of both whites and Indians when occasion arose. His was the first land claim in this region.

This beautiful strip of land bordering the lake for three-quarters of a mile, contained a large body of natural timber fringing the shore, and the mineral spring located near the lake.

There is a legend about the spring, one of the very few of this lake region. It states that a white traveler, whose pony was entrapped in the bog near the spring, barely escaped with his own life. While the Badgerow family was drying up the land around the spring, a task requiring twenty years, they found the jawbones of a horse embedded in the earth near the mouth of the spring, giving occasion to believe the story.

The Badgerow estate was named "Egralharve", a name coined by Mr. and Mrs. Badgerow from the names of their three sons, Egbert, Ralph, and Harve. A summer home was built for the family in 1891 and has been occupied every succeeding summer by members of the family. The estate comprises glen, forest, lakeshore, and farm lands.

In the spring of 1912, a bottling plant was erected to care for the water from the spring. The magic water was confined within a shed and piped to the factory on the lakeshore some yards distant.

The Egralharve Mineral Spring factory was operated in conjunction with a number of cottages and a club for entertainment of those who sought relief by drinking the healing water. Huge bottles of the water were also shipped out.

The venture was not profitable and the factory discontinued its output of mineral water and carbonated beverages after some years, and it was finally abandoned. The building was sold and since then the public has had no interest at Egralharve. There is still a small colony of summer homes at that location.

Of the brothers, only Harve of Chicago, survives. The property has been sold Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Moritz.

Although there were many known springs in the lake region after settlement, the Egralharve spring was one of the most widely known. The other was Willow Spring at Miller's bay, for many years the only source of drinking water in that area. That spring was filled in when the Floete residence was built and the lakefront graded for a long sloping lawn in front of the building. The spring was located along a lakeshore path.

Pillsbury's Point

Looking south from Des Moines beach.

"Triboji beach . . . ."

Fast-Growing Resort Area Replaces . . Head-of-the-lake Landing

The Head Of The Lake

The West Okoboji Landing, at the "head of the lake". The smaller steamers took passengers to the Rock Island train and waited for passengers from the train. They were taken to and from the little prairie depot at the West Okoboji station, by bus. The trip to meet the train was made twice daily, early in the morning and late afternoon, until the station was discontinued. The family that lived at that location turned their first floor into a small store to sell nick-nacks to those who waited between boats. They also served meals to passengers off the train and to boatmen. The place was commonly known as "The Head end", or "Edwards' Landing." Will Edwards operated the store, lunch room, and bus line. The Triboji development began just west of the Edwards store and ice house.

Triboji beach on the northwest shore of West Okoboji lake, is one of the newest resort projects and continues to grow every season. Its location is that formerly known as "the head of the lake."

It was a project of the Sioux City Tribune and drew its name from a combination of Tribune and Okoboji. In May, 1928, a contract was made with Mr. and Mrs. Alex Percival, owners of the farm there, for the development and promotion of sales of their 178 acres. It included approximately three-fourths of a mile on the water front.

Something over $30,000 was expended by The Tribune in laying out roads, planting trees, making proper water sheds, and in building the circle lagoon. The price of lots was set at $94 "in order that they might be in reach of everyone and the lake itself would become more popular," according to the late Eugene Kelly, then business manager of The Tribune company.

Within three years, 530 lots had been sold and by 1930 some fifty summer cottages had been built. The latter fact was considered remarkable in view of business conditions.

Residents of the lake region very generally doubted the success of a summer colony so far away from the amusement parks, a fact that had caused many similar plans to fail. The Tribune company advertised the beach widely and referred to it for many years as a civic project, "The Sioux City Tribune's Summer City."

A variety of entertainment was provided by the newspaper to call attention to the resort site. They had rodeos, boat races, wrestling and boxing matches, and barbecues. All of the events brought thousands of persons to the site.

Two parks and a large athletic field were included in the plat and streets were named for presidents of the United State and given Indian names.

Since the tract was platted, Highway No. 9 has been paved along the north side and Highway 32 has been blacktopped along the west. During the summer of 1932 some $10,000 was spent there in improvements at the business corner on the highway and in new cottages.

In addition to the many cottages owned privately and available for rent, the beach is popular for swimming because of its wide expanse of sand, and the bay between Triboji and the Methodist Camp Grounds is a favorite fishing spot. The lagoon, built at a big expense as a shelter for boats in stormy weather, has not become of special importance because storms are seldom severe enough to need a shelter of that kind.

Some years ago the newspaper's contract with Mr. and Mrs. Percival expired and the original owners are now the official sponsors of the Triboji beach colony and area.

Sand Spit

Sand spit at South Manhattan beach, running into Miller's bay, from the Iowa Lakeside laboratory grounds.

"The Iowa Lakeside laboratory . . . ."

Research Station Important Unit in Study of Natural History

The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory is one of the most important and most interesting places in the West Okoboji lake area.

It is located on the west shore of Miller's bay, between the lake and the place reputedly the highest spot of land in Iowa. It is operated as a field and research station by the University of Iowa during the summer season, and a program is now going forward to make it a year-around center for research concerning lakes and streams of Iowa. In addition to those attending classes during the summer, there are student and faculty research workers from many colleges and universities.

The late president of the University of Iowa, Dr. Thomas Huston Macbride, chose the site and founded the laboratory in 1909 when he was a professor of botany at Iowa City. A few buildings were gathered on the spot, a wooded hill overlooking the lake, and the dream of a great laboratory was born, to be passed on to successive students who came, studied, and went their ways.

Summer after summer, they gathered for research and study of botany, zoology, and kindred subjects. They were always handicapped for lack of adequate equipment and suitable working space, but the work went on and the dream lived.

Realization came in June, 1937, after the death of the founder. Then five split-rock and log laboratory buildings and the residence circle were completed to the last detail of construction, and occupied. At last, the hilltop had become a great laboratory.

For the first few years of its existence, the place was known as the Macbride laboratory. A group of alumni, many of whom had worked under Dr. Macbride, interested themselves in this work and his dream and formed the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory association, Inc. This was necessary because state law prohibits any branches of the university. It was, therefore, impossible for the laboratory to be owned by that institution.

It was the laboratory association that held title to the property and formed the governing body during the years of its growth and development. During that time, also, the association gained control of the 100 acres occupied by and surrounding the laboratory, most of it virgin prairie, woodland, and lakeshore property.

The original purchase in 1909 was of five acres with the main cottage and one or two smaller buildings for laboratory use. The next purchase was in 1929 when land north and a strip on the south, including several buildings, was added. In 1930, the land on the north shore of Miller's bay was purchased and in 1931 the sand spit was added to make the property total all of the north section of Miller's bay, bounded on the west and north by the roads and on the south by the Floete property.

The laboratory site was deeded to the State of Iowa in 1936, held in trust for research purposes. It is now administered by a board made up of representatives from the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory association, the University of Iowa, the State Conservation Commission, Iowa State College, the Iowa state executive council, the United States fish and wildlife service of the Department of the Interior, and the Iowa Co-Operative Wild Life research unit.

High Point

Reputedly the highest point of land in Iowa, showing the Beck home, now "High Point Hacienda", a night club, from the highway.

Equipment is furnished by the unit using it and the summer staff is made up of University of Iowa professors and outstanding scientists from other Iowa and midwestern colleges with occasionally someone from a distance.

In May, 1936, the United States Geological Survey began construction of the new laboratory group as a CCC project for the camp at Milford. The old buildings were moved and re-arranged or rebuilt and five new stone buildings were erected for work and study.

Dr. Macbride's plans for the laboratory were extensive but with occupancy of the new buildings, the large part of his dream was realized. He had hoped to have a telescope mounted on the high place behind the laboratory and to have a United State Meteorological station established. He also planned to allow the entire property to revert back to natural conditions and establish an arboretum of all wood plants that are able to survive the climate.

Although it is not on the hilltop, the laboratory does have a year-around weather station, operated by the caretaker, and the entire property has been allowed to grow in a wild state to give better study conditions. The arboretum has not yet come into the plan, nor has astronomy been added to the curriculum.

The stone laboratory units are probably far finer than any visioned in the early days, even by Dr. Macbride, and are the finest of their kind in the nation. They were built to anticipate the needs for research in Iowa for coming decades. There are four working units, each of which is 27x60 feet in size. The library, on the hill overlooking the working units, is 47x27 feet in size and is the first to be noticed from the lake and from the highway because of its location above the others.

That bit of ground first purchased by Dr. Macbride and his students is the laboratory campus proper where the working units look down upon the lake in a semi-circle, with the library at the top. The boat house and pumping stations, and the director's residence, are on the lakeshore immediately in front. A residence circle, at the north of the campus and across a natural ravine, complete the ground plan of the laboratory.

Unit No. 1 was dedicated to Dr. Macbride. The library was named in honor of Prof. Bohumil Shimmek, an outstanding Iowa scientist. The others are dedicated to Professor Pammel, Calvin, and Prof. J. H. Bodine of the University of Iowa who has been the laboratory director for many years.

The Shimek library shows the beauty of the rock work better than the other units, on the inside. There are two large fireplaces. Windows are high for proper lighting. Corner and wall book-cases and study tables were built by the CCC workmen. There are wall and side lights. Like other units, construction is of split rock and logs, inside and out. The library is the informal gathering place of students and was opened every Friday night during the summer session for public lecturers, usually given by one of the faculty members.

The working units each have a concrete aquarium 30 inches wide and the length of the building. These may be divided and sub-divided for special study of water life and are provided with many light outlets. Untreated lake water is pumped into the tanks.

There are four laboratory work rooms in each of the big buildings, each shop

equipped with a large concrete double drainboard sink, work tables in front of north windows, and ceiling-high cupboards for storage. Each work room connects with one or two others and with the aquariums.

Preliminary steps were taken by the co-operating agencies in November, 1940, toward using the laboratories for year-around research. The buildings were provided with removable chases for water pipes and installation of steam pipes for winter use, and the installation of the program is governed only by finances and projects of the governing body.

The boat house is on the lakeshore, of cobblestone construction, and houses the water pumps, motors, and supply tanks. The north wing is for winter storage and miscellaneous summer work. An upper deck is used for observation work. About 100 split rock steps lead to the campus elevation.

The mess hall and circle of small cabins for summer residents is located on the north campus. The mess hall is the only building, except the director's cottage, that remains of the old laboratory group. It has been rebuilt to conform with the general architectural plan.

Staff members and students occupy the 14x24 foot cabins in the residence circle. Each has bunks to accommodate eight persons, is compactly arranged and has a fireplace. Future plans call for construction of a custodian's residence to conform to the general plan.

There is a double water system on the laboratory grounds, and driveways from the main gates with stone pillars, to the north and south campuses.

Landscaping was not completed by CCC labor, for lack of time. The governing board has left the property in what appears to be a state of confusion but it was a part of the plan to allow the property to revert to the natural state. It is deemed much more valuable for study of weeds, trees, and insects. Professors who work there annually state that in time the campus will again revert to native grasses.

The site as originally chosen by Dr. Macbride was and still is, deemed ideal for study of physical geography, botany, zoology, and geology. In the early days of its work, Dr. Macbride wrote of the site: "Competent judges say there is no opportunity so fine for such research in all the continent. Here is the noblest illustration of the dynamics of the glacier, the pure glacial geology, to be found in all the United States. Indeed, northern Iowa is classic ground for the geologists of the world.

"The botanist finds about the lakes, such is the strange topography here, the most varied vegetation; aquatic plants bloom in scores of species everywhere — in the lake, in pool, in marsh, and shallow; plants that represent the dry western plains occur in the windswept hilltops, and the flora of all the northern prairie occupies the successive levels between lake and mesa.

"As the flora varies, so changes the fauna so that we have animal life of every sort; life adapted to deep fresh water, and life where water there is none, save as it falls in rain and abides not."

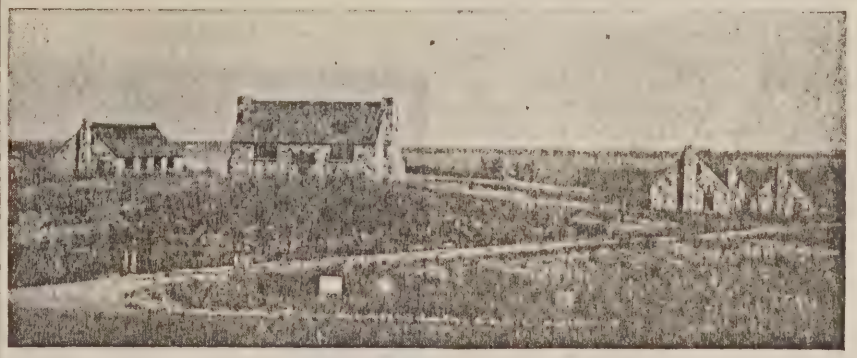
Research is carried on in many branches of science at the laboratory. In recent years, much of it has been concerned with the algaes of the lakes and streams of Iowa, particularly in this region, and various elements now affecting the lakes such as accumulated gases, temperatures, and infestations in the water. Studies also are now being made of insects and insect-infestations in the lakes and in trees and woodlands around the lakes, as well as diseases of fishes in the lake.

It is this type of research that is proposed on a year-around basis to study the natural weather conditions with regard to the lakes, and to keep records of

Cottage

One of the original cottages at the laboratory.

Laboratory View



General view of the laboratory buildings, from the highway. Shimek library is shown center.

Mess Hall

The new mess hall.

many things that may have a bearing on future studies and development of the lakes here and elsewhere. Among these problems is that of stocking the lakes with fish, and research into the reasons why fish die in such quantities each season, and what effect the wind and waves have on fish populations. The subjects for study for year-around records are almost without number.

The new laboratory buildings were constructed by the United States Geological Survey, with co-operation of the State of Iowa through the State Conservation Commission, and the organizations affiliated with the laboratory. At the time it was announced that the laboratory would have a great future in discovering facts pertinent to preserving of lakes, streams, and all kindred wild-

Prof. J. H. Bodine of the University of Iowa is the director. For a number of years, Prof. L. O. Nolf was resident director. He did considerable toward acquainting the public with the work of the laboratory and students by co-operating with local groups and inauguration of the weekly lectures. These always covered some phase of research pertinent to the lake region and were concluded with an open house. Large crowds attended to see the displays and hear about the work being done at the laboratory.

With the war, lack of students became a serious matter and for the first time in its history, the laboratory remained closed during the summer of 1944. In the summer of 1945, it was opened for a short time for student research.

"If you see a group . . . ."

Students at Laboratory Find Unusual Ways to Learn About Nature

If you see a group of husky young men setting mouse traps by the dozen in a patch of prairie around the lake region, don't call for the insane commissioner or get your shotgun. If you see a purple minnow swimming around under the dock, don't faint or decide the heat has you.

It's all a part of the "goofy business" done by the Iowa Lakeside laboratory professors and students, in the name of science. More specifically, the mouse traps and the butterfly nets and the purple minnows are all helping scientists to learn the whats and whys and hows about things in general at the Okoboji lakes.

Understanding of their study, as gained by the public in weekly lectures several summers, has gone far toward removing from the student groups the former common phrase "nuts" which was once applied.

For instance: Prof. R. L. King of the University of Iowa, told about the class in field biology. They set 144 dozen mouse traps on a half-acre plot, marked the victims, and reset the traps to count the take on a series of nights. The study revealed many interesting things about mouse population and in turn reveals many things about populations of other living things.

The project here was carried on in conjunction with similar experiments in other colleges and universities to determine the effect of climatic conditions on rodent populations and in turn learn about food and other things affecting other populations.

Fish management began as early as the eleventh century in China, according to Raymond E. Johnson of the University of Michigan, who spent the summer of 1941 with research pertinent to local fish problems. In his lecture, he gave five important fish management problems of these lakes.

First, he said, is the supply of fish by adequate spawning. Second is the large numbers of rough fish (he called them "cows that graze on the vegetation which produces food and shelter for game fish") and need for their control. Fish populations was third, with the fact that a lake can support only so many fish as an acre of ground can grow just so much food. Minnow populations are inadequate, he said.

Mr. Johnson found that two and possibly three crops of young fish were hatched in 1941 in Little Emerson's bay, and wondered if weather conditions might have been a factor. He recommended a study to find out.

Testing

G. E. Jay, a student, showing the water sample equipment.

Minnows were stained purple and yellow by the young scientist for the purpose of studying their habits of movement in these lakes. This was done in an effort to discover if possible the basic reason why minnows have declined almost to the vanishing point in these lakes. Their disappearance may have a direct bearing on the fish stocking problem as they are primary food for game fish.

Another problem wrestled with all summer by Mr. Johnson, was that of the large numbers of dead fish that wash ashore at all places on all lakes. He was not able to determine, in the one summer's study, what the cause was, or if the same cause could be applied to all species of fishes. The study was primarily of the fish found dead along shore, with cottage owners backing him toward a solution to keep their beaches free of dead fish and stench.

Dr. T. L. Jahn of the University of Iowa, gave an interesting lecture in 1940, on the subject of "Why Fish Don't Bite." He gave the public the benefit of findings in his studies over a number of years with regard to lake temperatures and chemical changes in the water over periods of time.

Fish don't bite when they are hunting a cool place where oxygen is plentiful enough to sustain life, Dr. Jahn said. "Not even fish can take it when the weather turns hot and there isn't any wind to ruffle the water and stir in a little oxygen," he said, and the finest lure won't tempt them a bit.

Dr. Jahn was also brave enough to declare that the waters of West Okoboji lake, heralded around the world for being the color of the sky, are blue "because of the algae and minerals found in them." He said the widely-heralded blue of West Okoboji is not an indication of its purity but is chiefly a reflection of algae.

Penetration of light into the water is of vast importance to lake life, he said, and it penetrates into East Okoboji only about two feet and only a few feet into West lake, due to the presence of so much algae. It is also partly due to the fact that these lakes are not of the "soft-water" type and have minerals that tend to color the water and prevent deep penetration of sunlight with its oxygen-giving powers.

The research has also established the fact that Emerson's bay is a lake within itself. The reef between Pocahontas point and Eagle point sets off the bay as a separate unit. There is very little freedom of passage by the fish from there into West Okoboji or vice versa.

Studying

Prof. H. E. Jaques of Wesleyan college, Mount Pleasant, with a group of students on a field trip.

Dr. Charles Carter, professor of biology at Parsons college, has made many studies of hanging bogs (springs) in this region and has discovered many important facts that are of immense value to this region as well as to science. In his lecture, he gave many of these facts to the public.

Residents here had believed for many years that the lakes were spring-fed, because the water never gets warm. Dr. Carter revealed that his studies of lake-bottom temperatures tend to affirm that old belief. He said there is little drainage and the levels in the lake remain fairly constant, and at one place in the lake, at least, the temperature of the water breaks so rapidly that a spring is indicated.

Rare salt-water plants native to the Massachusetts oceanside, and rare orchids have been found in the lake region by Dr. W. A. Anderson of the University of Iowa. These were found in the hanging bog near Silver lake at Lake Park and the flowing bog near Estherville in conjunction with Dr. Carter's studies.

Besides the rare species of orchids and the salt-water plants never before seen west of the Atlantic seacoast, Dr. Anderson found rare species of pink ladyslippers, violets, and sweetgrasses. He explained their presence by the fact that there were thousands of bogs throughout the nation many years ago and it is possible the rare plants crossed the continent to Iowa from bog to bog in the last 50,000 years. The water in the bogs is very alkaline, constant, and cold, and the rare plants cannot be transplanted to someone's residence but must be left where they are.

In the 1941 open house and exhibit at the laboratory, five new species of plants found in this region, were shown for the first time. One had never before been discovered here and is very rare. It and the others have now been added to the collection started in 1909 by the late Professor Shimek of the university.

It was also revealed, and specimens shown, that what is believed to be a new parasite has been added to the scientific catalogue from these lakes, during the 1941 season. Believed unknown to science, the little parasite was found in the liver of sunfishes here. Claim to its discovery will not be made for some time until research exhausts previous discoveries. If its claim is established, it will be only one of such discoveries made by students and professors here since the research center was established.

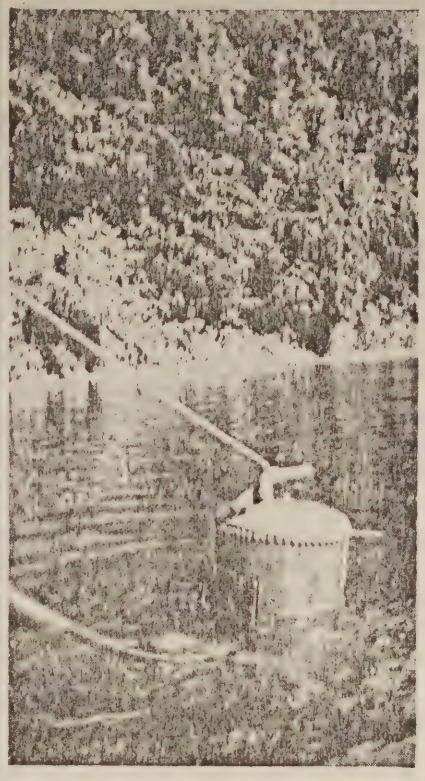
It was also revealed at the open house that forty-four species of fish had been catalogued in these lakes during the summer, about thirty-five kinds more than the average fisherman ever heard about.

The tiny animals that are responsible for the so-called "swimmer's itch" (Schistosome Dermititis), were shown by the scientists. The animals are so small that they must be displayed by the thousand to be seen by the naked eye. They bore under the skin of swimmers, seeking their natural host, a warm-bodied animal. They drop their tiny tails and burrow under the skin. Since they cannot live in the human body, they die and when they do so the swimmer has an acute itching sensation until the corpse is absorbed by the blood.

Workers at the laboratory have tried for many years to locate the source of the tiny animals in the lake but so far have failed to do so. They have determined that they are more prevalent at one time than another and at certain times of day above other periods. They have, however, done much toward informing the public about the tiny animals and stop the former panicky behavior when beach residents became prey for them.

The number of things that interest the faculty and students of the laboratory is almost endless. Included are birds, clams (mollusks), wood ticks, algaes, all kinds of minute plants in and out of the water, all kinds of minute animals in and out of the water, diseases of fish, diseases of trees, parasites on animals, fish, and trees, life cycles of animals, fish, and insects, the role of aquatic insects in Iowa lakes and streams; the relationship of parasites to conservation, the plant succession in the Okoboji region, weather conditions, and many other things.

Diving



The diving outfit for studying the lake bottom.

One lecture in 1940 included lantern slides made of pictures taken in the early days of the laboratory when students lived in tents and the old Willow Springs was the only source of drinking water. The pictures were shown by Dr. T. C. Stephens of Morningside college, then on the summer session faculty. He had also been on the faculty in the early days and showed a picture of a student group which included Dr. Ira Gabrielson, former head of the United States Biological Survey.

"Miller's bay, like . . . ."

Miller's Bay was West Shore Stopping Place Many Years Ago

Miller's bay, like Topsy, apparently "jest grew" into a favorite place for a summer cottage area. George B. Miller settled in that grove in the shelter of that beautiful bay. It was easily accessible to those who drove to the lake from the south and southwest, and was a beautiful picnic area. The bay has from the beginning been a favorite spot for fishing.

Mr. Miller added a building for extra sleeping rooms and turned his home into a small summer hotel. It was immensely popular for a long term of years. The hotel has now been torn down.

The story of Miller's bay as a cottage area is almost the story of Dr. Ferdinand J. Smith and his family residence there. He first came to the lakes in 1902 and has been one of the lake's most ardent boosters since then, and a year-around resident since 1919.

When Dr. Smith of Alton brought his wife and children to the lakes in 1902, they stopped at the Miller's Bay hotel. They were so pleased that the busy doctor was persuaded to take a real holiday the next summer and spend some time here with his family.

The first cottage on that side of the lake had been built by a man named Lodge. Dr. Smith and Dr. Karl Womser of Orange City bought it and several lots along with it. In 1903, Dr. Smith built his first cottage, a duplicate of the Lodge cottage, with two additional rooms, on the site of his present home, "Woodbine Lodge."

There was high water in 1903, Dr. Smith remembers vividly. When the family left here in the fall of 1902, there was a 150-foot sand beach in front of the bluff where their cottage stood. In the spring of 1903, Dr. Smith sent a carpenter here to erect the new cottage. The carpenter wrote back to ask where to build the boathouse. Dr. Smith replied "On the beach."

A second letter from the carpenter inquired if he should dig a hole in the bank to build the boathouse. Dr. Smith thought things were a little odd so he came to the lake to see what it was all about.

When Dr. and Mrs. Smith arrived at the Arnolds Park depot, they waited a long time for a steamboat and finally discovered the boats did not run every day the lake was free of ice. So they hired a man with a rowboat to take them to Miller's bay. The fisherman appeared to be taking them to the wrong place, but finally landed them on their own lot — and tied the boat to the flight of steps leading down to the lake! The Smiths were utterly amazed at the change in their lake front.

The Smith cottage was the first really modern one on the lake, Dr. Smith believes. Some of the men who worked on the place thought Dr. Smith was a little "balmy", he now recalls with merriment, because he had a water system and a bathroom, home-made gas for cooking, steam heat, and sixteen rooms. One workman remarked, in his hearing, that the Smith's "must be awfully dirty" to have a bathroom in the house. Dr. Smith also found that he must personally supervise construction of the water system and cesspool because the workmen had never heard of such a lay-out and weren't anxious to follow instructions.

Dr. Smith has been an active community booster since he became a permanent resident of the lake region. He organized the Okoboji Protective Association in 1905, for the purpose of protecting cottage property and everything for the good of the lakes, and served as its president for many years. He was also editor of the "Bulletin," official publication for many years, and is still a member of the board of directors.

Dr. Smith has always boosted everything he believed beneficial to the lakes and has not hesitated to oppose those things he deemed injurious. He has a flower garden in which many of the native flowers, now almost extinct elsewhere, thrive, and is a keen lover of the out-of-doors. His hobby is photography and he has taken many exceptionally beautiful pictures around the lake and has been liberal with sharing them. Dozens have appeared in the "Bulletin."

The physician was active in the movement to establish state parks on the lakes and aided in the incorporation of Wahpeton, the town that includes the Miller's bay-Manhattan beach region. He was also its mayor for some years, proud to have seen the place built up into a large summer colony with enough winter residents to make a town form of government advantageous.

"This is the tale . . . ."

Lake Region's Fairy Palace Overlooks Several Lakes From High Spot

This is the tale of a prince's palace — only the prince doesn't have to slash his way through the thicket of a hundred years' growth to find a beautiful and crumbled castle, with a sleeping and beautiful and captive princess.

This modern prince, if there be one, may ride grandly down the long avenue of trees, around a circle drive, and alight before a wide front door on a portico with balcony, like a cavalier from the Old South. He can enter into a great hall to swear he has just stepped into one of the most famous old plantation mansions. He can look upon beautifully clipped lawns dotted with fine old towering oaks and elms, and over the wide expanse of the West Okoboji lake region.

Unfortunately, the prince must also bring his own princess — but the palace is ready and waiting. It is "The Highlands", and locally called the "Floete Mansion." It is not only the showplace of the lake region, at a very discreet distance from both highway and lake, but it is one of the finest and most elaborate residences in the midwest, and compares favorably with many of the mansions famed as homes of movie stars on the west coast.

In fact, it is such a fine place that it was chosen in 1927 as the finest Iowa could offer President Calvin Coolidge for the Summer White House. E. L. C. White of Spencer, H. E. Narey of Spirit Lake, Charles A. Rawson, then national republican chairman, Hanford MacNider, then assistant secretary of war, and the late Dr. George Bemis of Garner, extended a personal invitation at the white-house, April 16, for the lake region. They were courteously received, had lunch with the president, and later showed his emissary, Col. Edmund W. Starling around the lakes. But the president went to the Black Hills and none of the Okoboji finery tribe had a chance to nibble a presidential hook.

At various times the big empty mansion has been considered for occupancy such as a home for aged and a veterans' home, but it still awaits the old security of people within its walls and eager voices along its halls and across its lawns.

"The Highlands" stands on a knoll overlooking Miller's bay, with the highest point of Iowa land directly behind it. The late Franklin Floete of Spencer, a lumber man, built it in 1917. The seventy acres of land is said to have cost $20,000. It was understood the materials, ordered by Mr. Floete, cost $40,000, and the elaborate and complete furnishings cost another $75,000.

Soon after completion, the estate was the scene of many brilliant gatherings with Mrs. Floete as hostess. It was then left idle and later abandoned. Most of the beautiful furniture was shipped to California. It has not been occupied for years, except by a caretaker.

Should the prince of a fairy tale arrive down the avenue of trees, and alight to enter the great hall, he would surely think he was in the deep Old South. The great hall is much too big for one rich carpet such as present-day movies would provide for it, but it has two grand staircases with mahogany railings, leading to the second floor. The great hall has golden light fixtures, beautiful ivory paneling, thick oak floors, and a fireplace.

The large dining room for the prince and his guests is on the north and has German silver-plated fixtures and ivory paneled walls. A butler's pantry opens off the dining room, equipped with hot plates to condition food sent up from the basement kitchen.

The prince could take his choice of lounging on one of the three sun porches, one on the north, one on the south, and the long beautiful room that runs the entire length of the east side overlooking the lake. There is a library with French or billard room opening off it, as well as the south sun porch. Each of the rooms has a fireplace.

There is a wide choice of sleeping quarters for the prince and his guests. He and the princess would, of course, occupy the master's suite with its living room, two bedrooms, dressing room, and bath. On the second floor there are also four suites each with a living room, bedroom, and bath. Each of the suites has a fireplace in the living room.

On the third floor there are eight bedrooms, each with running water, two baths, four fireplaces, and these are for the servants the prince will need to keep his large house in order. There are also two suites of four rooms and bath, each, over the garage at the south. That building has its own heating plant and is large enough for five of the biggest limousines. The 100-ton icehouse completes the group.

The basement floor, east side of which overlooks the lake and is as pleasant as most of the finer homes, houses the kitchen, laundry, storage rooms for trunks, vegetables, a carload of coal, a wine cellar, a maid's dining room with fireplace, and the three rooms for the caretaker, also with fireplace and bath.

There are many, many windows in the big mansion, all bedrooms are on the outside with windows overlooking the lake or woods. The large front sunporch is one of the finest rooms in any residence and has an exceptional view of the lake.

The caretaker keeps the place in order at all times, ready at any moment for the prince and princess to move into their quarters and resume living where it was interrupted many years ago. The lawn is ready for children, or fairies, to romp and play. The house is always clean and there are blooming flowers in season.

Empty as it is, the mansion is not forgotten by any means. The state organizations of Knights of Pythias and Pythian Sisters once took an option on the property, hoping to convert it into a home for the aged. Lack of funds prevented realization of the plan.

In 1929, announcement was made that the "Empire club", to be ultra-exclusive, was to take over the property and spend an additional $300,000 to expand it into the smartest thing between the coasts. The option was said to be for $120,000. Options were also held on the wooded tract at the south and the West Okoboji Golf and Country club.

The plan was very big-time with provisions for life-time membership and everything a member could wish for, at hand at all times. The club rolls were to be limited to 200 members, mid-west exclusively. But the Empire club died, as many other lakes projects have died, while still a dream. The reason given was the general business slump late in 1929, after the opening date had been set for the spring of 1930.

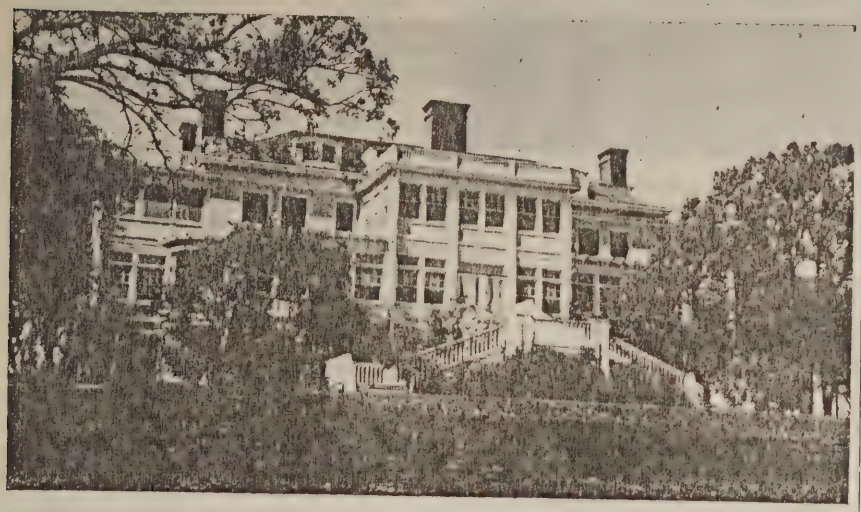
In 1930, the Floete mansion was offered as a possible site for the new Iowa Veterans' hospital. A committee from the lake region again promoted it as a national site, but Washington announced it must be nearer the center of the state for consideration.

So—the palace waits, like a fairy tale palace should—without a sleeping princess but certainly with all of the beauty and sturdiness of an old castle and with as much eagerness for occupation and usefulness as any old castle should have.

(Note: In the fall of 1945, Franklin Floete of Des Moines, representing the Floete estate, sold the mansion and adjoining property to a group of wealthy mid-western men. They announced immediately they planned to convert the palace into a membership club to be known as the Okoboji club. Work began at once in building of outside bedroom suites, and remodeling of the mansion for club use. The plan also called for a number of family type cottages and a lakeshore pavilion for a teen-age social center.)

(Work continued throughout the winter of 1945-46 and the opening date was set for Memorial day, 1946. The club will at no time be open to the public. Memberships will be carried by many of the summer resident property owners, and by non-residents. Its promoters hope it will become the social center of the lake region for members. Lester Heinsheimer of Sioux Falls, S. Dak., and Fair Oaks beach, and Earl Tangney of Spencer and Dixon's beach represented the new club in the initial announcement, and supervised the adaptation of the mansion and grounds.)

Fairy Palace



The Floete mansion from the east, to become the Okoboji club in the spring 1946.

"One of the most elaborate . . . ."

Like Many Projects, Dream of A Venice on Lakes Faded and Died

One of the most elaborate dreams ever to bloom and fade in the development of West Okoboji lake was that of Lakewood park. The plat is between Emerson's and Miller's bay but few persons in the lake region could tell a questioner, without first consulting a map.

It was a beautiful dream and it cost thousands of dollars before it failed. And again, there remains a possibility that the dream will revive someday and bloom again.

Lakewood park was to be the American Venice, where gondolas were to glide on calm waters for the pleasure of thousands of summer guests. There were to be lagoons, islands, waterways, rustic bridges, driveways, and soft music and moonlight nights on the canals to delight the guests—and even a Dutch windmill with reading room in its tower!

The property involved in the plat of Lakewood park was a large part of that lying between the two bays and between Eagle point and Gull point, and land back from the lake some distance. It was part of 1,000 acres owned by J. A. Beck of Fairfield and H. E. Mills of Spirit Lake.

In 1911 a dredge was brought here from Royal Center, Ind., by E. B. Thomas who had the contract to carve the canal system out of the 300 acres between the lake bays. The dredge weighed 100 tons, was 72 feet long and 16 feet wide, had a capacity of 2,000 cubic yards per day, was operated by five steam engines, and was run two shifts a day.

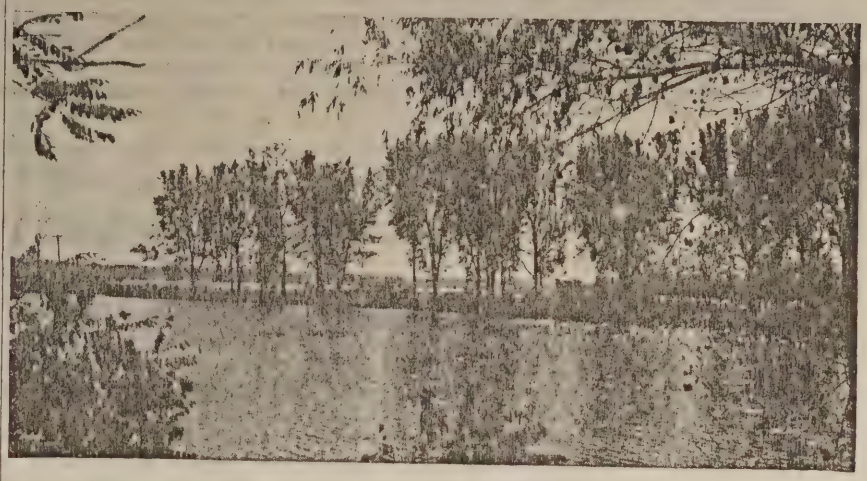
Five openings were dug to the lake, one north of Eagle point, one south of Gull point, two into Emerson's bay, and one into Miller's bay. The canal varied in width from 12 to 8 feet and was deep enough to permit 39 inches of water at all times. The deepest cut was 17 feet, 4 inches. The canals were three miles long.

Lakewood park was platted into 500 lots. Several tracts were set aside for park purposes, the largest to be called Burr Oak park. There were driveways from 30 to 75 feet wide, and rustic bridges for foot passage over the canals.

Dredging cost $12,000. The estimated total cost of the project was $20,000. The promoters believed that, aside from the attraction of gondolas and the canals, the ditches would be a safe harbor for boats during stormy weather.

The dream of the builders did not attain any portion of reality. There were no gondolas placed on the canals; there was no mad scramble for purchase of lots on the plat. The canals remain a token of a dream that did not come true and are for the most part muddy, stagnant stretches of inland water of common ditch variety. They are now being used by the State Conservation Commission for spawning areas.

The Lagoon



Section of the lagoon, 1941, looking toward West Okoboji, southwest. Trees are along a road that led to Eagle point.

In about 1914, Mr. Beck built the Crescent Beach hotel on the north shore of Emerson's bay, probably as a project to attract visitors to the lakewood park district. It was then, and still is more or less off the beaten path and has remained a favorite place for those who desire absolute quiet. The hotel was built on a tract with 1,000 feet of fine sand beach, with one of the canals running behind the building.

W. A. White, then manager of The Earling hotel in Spencer, and a former Washington, Iowa, banker, purchased the Crescent Beach hotel in about 1916, purely as a speculation. It was rented for some years and finally remodeled. Mr. White then took over its management and built the hotel into a popular retreat for those desiring to be off the beaten track. The hotel facilities were adapted to family parties and Mr. White erected some detached suites and cottages in connection. The dining room became a favorite for fishermen and parties.

The hotel took its name from the crescent-shaped beach between Breezy point and Eagle point. The grounds were landscaped and the lasting impression of the location is peace and quiet. After Mr. White's death, Mrs. White continued management of the hotel.

During the early part of the war, Mrs. White did not maintain complete service at the hotel. She sold in the spring of 1945 to Carroll A. Lane of

Crescent Beach

The Crescent Beach hotel.

Carroll. He repaired and generally improved the hotel and restored the popularity the hotel dining room had held for many years.

After retiring from the hotel, Mr. Beck built a summer home on the highest point in the lake region, declared the highest point in Iowa. Appropriately enough, he called it "Overlook" because the windows commanded a wide view of the lakes. Mr. Beck died in Fairfield in October, 1930, and Mrs. Beck died in the following June.

He was associated with many of the development projects of the lake region. One of the most successful of his ventures was that of The Inn hotel which has been popular from the very start. His home on the high point was allowed to rot away after Mrs. Beck's death and it was a windswept skeleton of a house for many years. In 1941 the location was purchased and turned into a night club, called "High Point." The lights are visible all over the lake region.

The canal venture, itself, is gradually becoming a summer residence area. Many cottages have been built in the area within the last few years. The Eagle point and Spencer beach sections have filled up rapidly. In addition the original canal area now includes the Walther League camp, the West Okoboji Golf and Country club, and the large Gull Point state park. There is, as a result, considerable traffic now on the driveways laid out for the Lakewood park project. Agitation is more pronounced annually for some straight hard-surfaced roads through the area to accommodate the traffic.

"The farm lands . . . ."

Farm Lands Gave Way to Golf Greens in Three West Okoboji Areas

The farm lands bordering on the lakes have not been used exclusively for platting into lakeshore resort areas. Whether it would haunt the original farmer-owners, or not, some of the fertile land that was homesteaded is now smartly-clipped golf course greens and fairways.

The first farm to be turned into a playground was taken over June 30, 1917 with J. H. McCord of Spencer, president, and W. A. White of Milford, secretary. It was called the West Okoboji Golf and Country club and was the smart project of the year.

The original tract of eighty acres was purchased from the Okoboji Land and Lot company, owners of the land upon which the canals and Lakewood park were platted. A corporation was formed with 250 shares of stock at $100 per share, in the club. Members were from many states, regular visitors in the lake region.

A club house was built, and a residence for a caretaker who was also the professional, at a cost of $6,000. Additional improvements were made from time to time to include a watering system, improved grounds, and additional equipment. In about 1930 the corporation converted another fifteen acres of farm land into the course and re-arranged it for eighteen holes.

During the winter of 1933, the clubhouse and residence burned and with the purchase of additional acreage in the following summer, the new clubhouse was built in a heavily wooded area at the east. The new clubhouse was beautifully furnished and offered lunch room and dining room service, a golf shop, and a full-time professional.

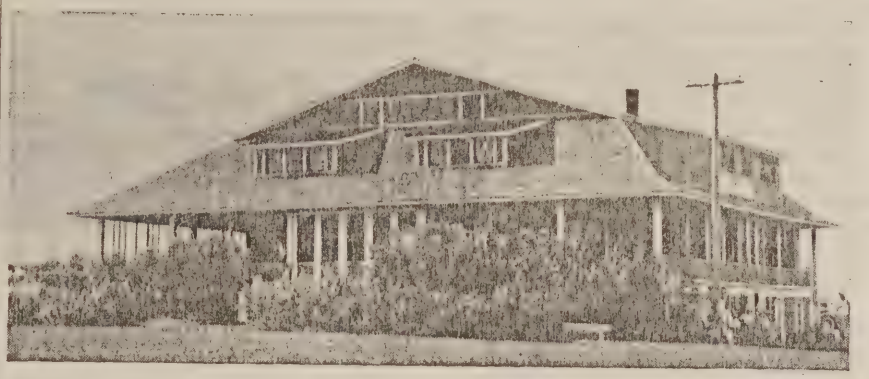
The financial burden of the new clubhouse and grounds was too much for the stockholders of the club, largely from the Milford and northwest Iowa area, and the place changed hands. It is at present owned and operated by D. M. Sterns of Okoboji, who sponsored the "Golden Mashie" tournament for top-flight golfers, every summer in early September.

The West Okoboji course is one of the finest in Iowa, lying partially in open country and partially in beautiful woodland. Some of the biggest golf tournaments have been held at the course, including the Iowa amateur open, the Iowa professional, and the Iowa women's annual events.

The highest, driest, and coolest golf course in Iowa, Hinshaw Heights, is a part of the Brownell farm on the north shore of the lake. It's peak is only five feet lower than the so-called "high place in Iowa" across the lake toward the southwest. Therefore, it catches every breeze that blows.

The course is the result of a land boom that collapsed in 1920. A group of Spirit Lake men contracted for 160 acres of farm land and had a private

First Golf Clubhouse



Williamz picture of the first West Okoboji Golf and Country club's clubhouse. This building burned.

West Okoboji Clubhouse

The new West Okoboji clubhouse, built in a grove at the northeast corner of the course. Entertained at many state tournaments. Clubhouse dining room open to the public.

golf course laid out and played there for several years. When the boom collapsed and the pavement was not forthcoming, the owner, E. C. Hinshaw of Spirit Lake, studied long on whether to let the property go back into farming or go ahead with the golf course idea.

Mr. Hinshaw studied the land for days and finally planned an entirely new layout. He laid out the holes without engineering advice, reserving a forty-acre spot in the center for a picnic area around a small lake. The first nine was built near the clubhouse, and the second so both would end at the clubhouse. This was and is a very popular feature.

First Brooks Club

The original log cabin clubhouse on the Brooks Country club grounds, showing circle drive and shelter at beginning of course.

Brooks Country Club

New Brooks Country club building, showing circle drive and beautiful landscaping. Caddy house, of same design, is barely visible at extreme right.

Along The Highway

One of the beautiful sights in the lake region is the row of poplar trees along the highway south of the Brooks Country club circle drive.

The golf-course owner also devised a method of building sand greens so well that they have been studied and copied by clubs all over the nation. Mr. Hinshaw has been called to various places to aid in building the greens which are said to play with the same resilience found on good bent grass greens, without the disadvantages of those greens. His course can accommodate from 150 to 200 players daily. The course is opposite the Methodist Camp Grounds, on the east.

The old gags about "cow pasture pool" and "corn-field tag" could be applied to the course that was carved out of farm land and a cornfield along Highway 71, in 1929. Is is now one of the finest courses in the midwest and one of the beauty spots of the lake region —Brooks Country club, overlooking East Okoboji south of the airport.

The course was started from "less than scratch" on the gently-rolling 150-acre farm along the highway. Six weeks after the property was purchased, the depression struck with full force, according to Val M. Brooks, one of the promotors and manager of the course.

Plans were not abandoned and the course was laid out. A small log cabin served for a clubhouse and Mr. Brooks determined to make his course an ideal one for the "average golfer". He had to sell men and women of this area on the golfing idea and erase the idea that it was a vacationing rich man's game.

He invited school children in for a series of free lessons every spring. Garfield Harker of Okoboji, the only pro ever at the club, was the class instructor. Many of the youths who learned that way later worked as caddies and Jack Webb of Spirit Lake has set a name for himself among Iowa golfers as a result.

Mr. Brooks built his club membership up to over 250 members in Iowa and Minnesota, by convincing business men and women that golfing is for the average person, is an average game, and can be played after working hours. The club is widely patronized, also, by summer guests.

Besides the effort to sell the average person on golfing, Mr. Brooks has staged numerous big exhibitions, having brought Gene Sarazen and Babe Didrickson here for a match, and the former national champion Johnny Goodman, and others such as Horton Smith, Jimmy Thompson, Johny Goodman, Bill Schuchart and others. Until the war he held an annual amateur tournament in which many of the ranking Iowa golfers were entered.

A new modern-type clubhouse was built in 1936, with large screened porches and air conditioning by special water system. The caddy house is of identical design and a large number of caddies are kept busy all season.

In 1938 the course installed a night driving range that attracted large

crowds, sometimes all-night crowds. Recent years have continued the improvements and the course now has all of the latest type of grounds equipment as well as a full-stocked golf shop and other features of a good clubhouse.

The course management keeps an air of welcome about the place as many golfers literally play "on the run" because the course is so near the center of everything and so easily accessible. The clubhouse, as well as those at West Okoboji and Hinshaw Heights, is open for private parties.

War brought about the usual number of changes in the golfing situation in the lake region. Mr. Sterns turned his golf course over to a cattle grazing range to contribute to the great necessity for more meat. He had offered the club and course to the government early in the war for a naval aviation training base and it was not accepted. The clubhouse was opened to the public again in 1945 and plans made to re-condition and re-open the course for the 1946 season.

The high-powered lights of the Brooks club night driving range went away to war and the tournament was cancelled but the course stayed open throughout the war. The Hinshaw course also remained open.

"Among the Christian . . . ."

Bible Conference Property Owned By Lutherans at Miller's Bay

Among the Christian institutions attracted to the Okoboji lakes for annual sessions is the Lutheran Bible school at Miller's bay. It was started in 1924 by the Iowa District Sunday school committee of the United Danish Lutheran Synod of America. It began as a training school for Sunday school teachers and has now widened its scope to become a Bible institute, teachers' training school, and pastors' retreat.

The early sessions were held in a large tent on the shore of the bay. They were so successful that a permanent organization was made, the Lake Okoboji Lutheran Bible school association, and incorporated under the Iowa laws in the fall of 1926.

A site for the permanent meeting place was purchased in the spring of 1927 and a large frame tabernacle was built at a cost of $1,300. It is an ample auditorium, completely screened, and located on a knoll overlooking the lake. It is surrounded by heavy woodland.

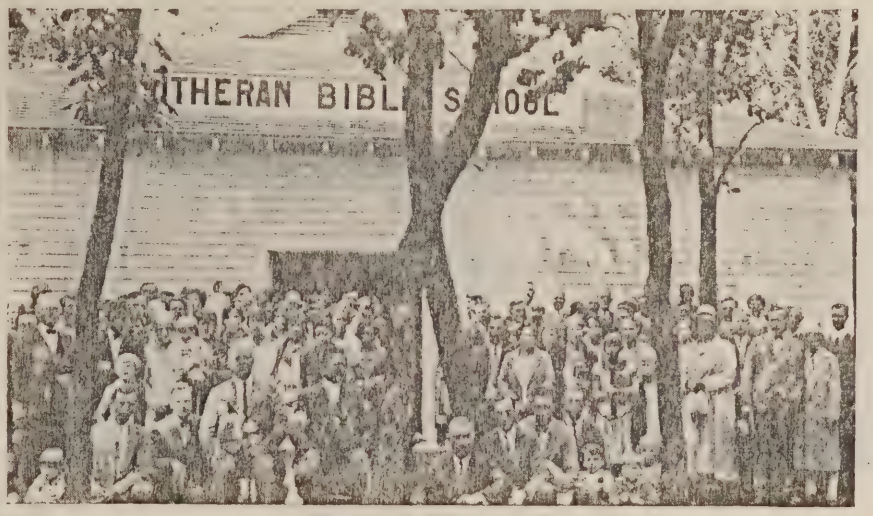
The Bible school association owns and controls the property surrounding the tabernacle and a dining room and kitchen cottage and dormitories. Any Lutheran is eligible to membership and may attend the sessions.

A two-week period is set aside every August, early in the month, for the annual conference. Lutherans from many states attend, combining vacations with religious study and instruction. The classes and sermons are in charge of leading churchmen.

The programs fill the conference days with study, evangelistic services, and recreation supervised by camp leaders.

In 1945, the organization bought the place known as the "annex" and enlarged the program. Improvements had been added from time to time and more complete use made of the Bible school property.

Lutheran Conference



The crowd at an early Lutheran Bible school, Miller's bay, probably at the dedication of the tabernacle.

"Even as the Indians held . . . ."

American Eagles Once Nested on West Side of West Okoboji Lake

Even as the Indians held this lakeland sacred, so the birds of the air and beasts of the field found it a land wild and suitable for them. Certain it is, the wildest creatures of the woodland and plain founded homes here.

When settlers first came, and for many long years thereafter, this was the nesting place of the kings of the air—the American eagles. It is a fact not generally known, but those old-timers who remembered the eagle's nest, also declare that civilization encroached and caused the huge birds to leave this territory, as it did many other of the very wild things.

Because of the eagles, West Okoboji lake has its Eagle point. It was on that

promontory that the king of birds built and maintained a nest.

In a huge tree, remembered as the largest ever to grow in the lake region and tall enough to tower above the lakeland jungle at its feet, the huge nest rested. It was probably one of the first trees to grow there and preceded the present forest. Scientists say that trees crept gradually about these lakes after the glacier left and that footholds were slow and can be traced well from shore to shore.

The tree was so large that it could be seen from any point on the lake and the nest looked, from the Arnolds Park side, to be about the size of one of the smaller steamboats or a large water tank.

The eagles still came regularly and raised several broods of young after the George Elston family came here in 1880. The Elston boys, with others of the community, did a lot of exploring. Once they went across the lake to get a close-up view of the eagle's nest. The trip was an adventure planned for some time, and they had also hesitated for some time because they had heard that eagles reportedly carried little boys away.

The youngsters fought their way through the jungle of young trees and underbrush to the very foot of the old tree, but that was far enough. None of them was brave enough to climb the forty-foot limbless trunk and take a peek inside the nest. They admitted they were "scared enough" and quite brave to walk up to the trunk of the big tree.

The huge nest was made of sticks and materials to make it look much like other birds' nests and was about "the size of a house," a statement confirmed by old-timers not with the party of brave explorers.

The tree stood somewhat northwest of the point itself, probably in the grove that is now a part of Gull Point state park. The nest was visible for many years after the eagles abandoned it. None seems to recall what became of the nest and tree. It is supposed that the huge abandoned nest crashed during a storm and that the old tree rotted and died. Possibly the reason nobody knows is that the nest became less interesting every year after the eagles left it.

At the time the huge birds still nested here, the point was known as Sam Pillsbury's point. Later it was changed to Eagle point to avoid confusion with Pillsbury's point near the Arnolds Park resort, and to remember the eagle.

The point is directly north of Pocahontas point and the reef between forms Emerson's bay at the west, named for Tom Emerson who homesteaded there. The point directly north along a crescent-shaped beach from Eagle Point (now Spencer beach for the colony of Spencer residents) was by common usage always called Gull point. The reason was that it was a gathering place for the gulls and often the sands were covered with them. It was also a favorite place of the pelicans. Both gulls and pelicans still frequent that point.

The forest where the huge tree stood is now mostly burr oak, although there is a mixture of other trees. The old tree that so proudly sheltered the eagles was possibly a burr oak or red oak, it is believed. It is remembered as at least four feet through with no branches for about forty feet up its trunk.

Others of the early-day trees, without eagle nests, also were a part of the memory of the Elston boys. A huge basswood tree was in their dooryard when they lived on Upper Gar lake. The tree was so tall that it could be seen from Spirit Lake and once a man there tried to persuade Mr. Elston to have an American flag flown from its top. The idea was all right, but nobody would volunteer to put the flag up. The tree got hollow and dangerous and was cut down. It is thought it may have been the same tree that early residents on the Okoboji side remember as towering above all other trees in the grove south across the grade.

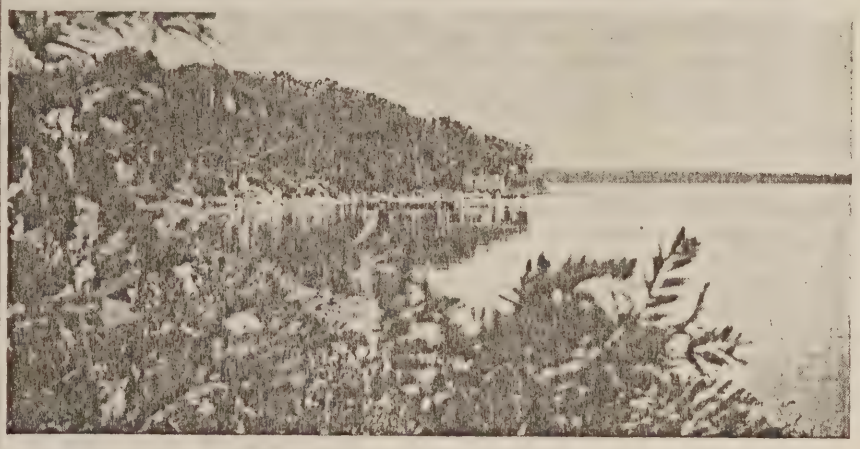
The last of the big trees, it is believed, was an oak on the Lynhurst property, now The Villa, which yielded over twelve cords of wood. It was so large that no crosscut saw in the territory was long enough to cut through it and parts of it had to be blasted. The tree stood about where the L. E. Williams home was later built. It may have been taken out to make room for the street. George Elston was street commissioner at the time and had charge of felling the big tree, in about 1896.

Other huge trees were felled in what is now the amusement park, and still others are standing yet in various places around the lakes. None of them, however, are believed now to be as big as the eagle tree or some of those felled early in this region's history. The reason is simple enough, this country was all cut over to provide lumber for building and fuel, and it is believed very few of the big trees that are big now, were desirable for lumber and for that reason were not cut.

Although the timber of the Okobojis is predominantly oak, especially burr oak, there are many grand old elms and many kinds of trees native to the region. In the early days there were many evergreens, especially around the Ford Dodge point (originally Smith's point) location and north from there. A grove of hard maples was on the Dixon's beach area when settlers first came and it was first called Maple grove for that reason. A few of those trees remain, as well as a few of the native evergreens.

In the fall of 1945, a hunter reported having seen what he believed to be an American bald eagle, on West Okoboji. It is said the American eagle migrates south along the Mississippi and is known to go inland scores of miles in its travels.

Eagles Nested Here



Southwest view of Eagle point.

"Camp Okoboji on . . . ."

Walther League's Camp Okoboji Founded As Result of Y. W. C. A. War Work

Camp Okoboji on Emerson's bay is one of the busiest places around the Okoboji lakes. Situated high on a bluff overlooking the lake, it is an ideal place for summer recreation. It is owned by the Iowa West Walther League and was founded by the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States.

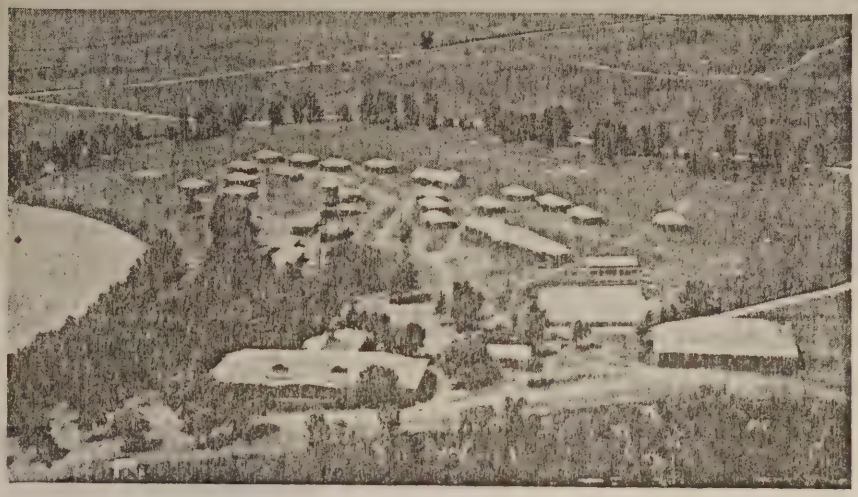
The camp was established as a direct result of World War I. During the war, the Y. W. C. A. maintained a nationwide organization which provided vacation camps and recreation for industrial women. They were administered by the Y. W. C. A. war work council. At the close of the war, there was a large sum of money on hand and various tracts of land that had been donated for the work.

Decision was made to establish three national camps at strategic points in the nation. West Okoboji lake was chosen for the mid-western camp. Others were located on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

The original tract was 27 acres, purchased from the Okoboji Land and Lot company for $30,000, in 1919. Five army barracks were brought from disbanded mid-western army camps and made into dormitories on the site.

The first camp period was opened in 1920, with a capacity of 235 campers. There was a full attendance and Miss Ethel Neirmeyer was in charge. From then until the camp was abandoned in the middle-thirties, it became the summer gathering place for Y. W. C. A. workers of the midwest and included conferences of Girl Reserves and business and industrial women's groups.

Airplane View of Camp



Air view of Y. W. C. A. camp.

Camp Entrance

Group of Walther League officials installing new sign at entrance to camp.

Leadership was always from national headquarters in New York. Before the camp was ordered on the market and abandoned by the Y. W. C. A., it was opened to other groups for conference use. It was vacant for a summer or two and the Y. W. C. A. conferences held at Camp Foster.

During its administration and ownership of Camp Okoboji, the Y. W. C. A. put some $100,000 into the camp. Additional land was bought to bring the total of thirty acres and twenty-one cottages were built to replace the old army barrack dormitories. Eleven small cottages were built for class work and water and sewer systems installed. The camp had the finest equipment for dining hall, cabins, and recreation.

Francesca Winston lodge, one of the original buildings, was built in 1920 with money given by Mrs. W. O. Winston of Minneapolis, chairman of the north central field committee of the war work council, in memory of her daughter. The little girl's savings account of $250 was given for the camp flag pole. In 1921 Mrs. Winston paid the $15,000 mortgage on the camp and added $5,000 to the building fund. The money was later spent for the main lodge building which houses the kitchens, dining room, and office space.

The building group now also includes the Mary Hormel cottage, donated by the Hormels of Austin, Minn., in memory of Mary Foster Hormel, a lodge for conference leaders, a camp director's cottage, and a headquarters building. The

recreation hall seats about 300 persons and there is a small camp store and refreshment place, an information bureau building, laundry and shower houses, linen house, and a large garage.

The Iowa West Walther League purchased the valuable property in March, 1940, for $15,000 and took possession April 1. The young people's societies of all Synodical Lutheran churches of western Iowa were sponsors of the project. They bought bonds after formation of a holding company, to share in the project. The camp is now administered by the Iowa West Walther League Summer Camp association. Theodore Wolfram, Jr., of Ventura, was the first camp manager and resided there from May 1 to Sept. 10.

The camp was re-opened May 31, 1940, for the first annual Walther League three-day conference. Attendance ran into the thousands for that week-end. Dedication of the camp was held that Sunday with thousands of Lutherans attending from all over the mid-west.

The Walther League camp began under an entirely new policy and program. Besides the many Lutheran gatherings planned for the various periods of the summer, the League camp also invited other religious conferences to the advantages of the camp. In June of 1940 and 1941 some 400 Sea Scouts of America from all over the mid-west held their annual regatta at the camp and on Emerson's bay.

Camp Okoboji also became a family gathering place for vacation and recreation. Some of the residence cottages were remodeled to permit family vacations and the camp encouraged small church groups and house parties to use the camp facilities. There are accommodations for 400 persons.

The camp was renovated before its opening by volunteer labor from the Walther League groups and the camp management has encouraged such participation in the common camp venture. Sunday services are held regularly with prominent speakers and special events are scheduled every few weeks at the camp.

The Lutheran Laymen's League annual retreat is now an established factor at the camp for the closing days and is attended by several hundred men and women. At the 1940 annual banquet, Lieut.-Gov. B. B. Hickenlooper was the speaker, and in 1941 Gov. George A. Wilson of Iowa was the guest speaker. His address was one of the outstanding events of the year on the Okoboji lakes when he spoke of Iowa's greatness having resulted from the fact that farmers came with axes on their shoulders and Bibles in their hands, bringing with them their preachers and schoolteachers to make religious and cultural centers in Iowa valleys and on Iowa prairies.

The Walther Leaguers have spent considerable money and volunteer labor on camp improvements since taking over. The road has been widened and parking space provided by the hundreds of cars that arrive on big days. Games courts have been enlarged or added to, and a wide variety of special entertainment features provided. Every building in camp was painted and everything repaired.

A review of the 1941 activities is representative of the general scope the camp now has in its service to Lutherans of the mid-west: Walther League convention, pastors' and teachers' convention, Northwest Iowa Young people's conference, Sea Scout regatta, Walther League summer camp, 4-H club girls and boys conference, Y. W. C. A. industrial conference, Iowa Girl Reserve conference, pastors' and teachers' retreat, Estherville circuit Luther League Bible camp, Evangelical Free church conference, Iowa Young People Covenant conference, Sioux City-Sioux Falls Circuit Luther League Bible camp, district pastoral conference, and Laymen's retreat.

Camp Lakefront

General view of the camp's lake-front buildings. They overlook Emerson's bay from a high bank. The administration building and dining room, left. The convention hall, right.

"Pocahontas point . . . ."

Pocahontas Point Illustrates Transfers Of Lands in Earliest Lake Era

Pocahontas point on the south end of West Okoboji lake was not named for Pocahontas, the Indian princess. Instead, it was named for Pocahontas, Iowa, hometown of its founders, A. O. Garlock and W. D. McEwen, who built the first cottage there after platting the point.

John M. Brown was the homesteader on the property that now includes the point. Brown's bay in the circle between Terrace park and Pocahontas point, was named for the homesteader.

Interesting information, probably typical of Okoboji lake region land, is shown in old courthouse records. Almost all of the property around the lake changed hands many times in early years, was held by a land company with big ideas and platted for a resort area, and then purchased by groups or individuals.

Records at the courthouse begin in 1872 for the Pocahontas point area when a land transfer from John M. Brown to Jacob Folsum was recorded, Jan. 4. It is apparent that Folsum failed to complete the deal as the next transfer is from Daniel Bennett, sheriff of Dickinson county, to A. S. Ormsby, recorded Oct. 30, 1877.

Ormsby deeded the property to C. Burley, single, Dec. 1, 1877, after a month's ownership. A year later, Dec. 2, 1878, Samuel E. and Frederick A. Burley, single, deeded the property back to Ormsby. He, in turn, kept the land until July 18, 1881, when another transfer is

recorded, this from Edwin Ormsby and wife (presumably A. S. Ormsby) to John Bishop, single.

Bishop owned the land only nine days and transferred it to John Bruce July 27, 1881. Mr. and Mrs. Bruce kept the property until they deeded it to the North Western Land company, Nov. 21, 1888. July 14, that year, prior to the recording of the second deed given by Bruce, the North Western Land company, grantor, deeded the land to the Pocahontas Land and Trust company.

This may have been some resort project idea, and may have been in connection with the narrow gauge railway that was at that time being planned to the lakes from Des Moines. That company, which may have been the North Western Land company or some associate, owned the land comprising Terrace park at the east. The idea is simply a guess, as the records do not show the exact nature of the company nor its operations. What the Pocahontas Land and Trust company was, is not recorded, except that W. D. McEwen was president of the company and Rolfe was the place of business.

On May 14, 1900, the Pocahontas Land and Trust company sold to its president, W. D. McEwen listed of Pocahontas county, and A. O. Garlock, listed as Polk county, the 130 acres of land for $6,000.

The men built a cottage on Pocahontas point, which they named the promontory. A short time later the L. C. Thornton family of Pocahontas built a cottage which they still own and occupy each season. George Fairburn of Fonda built a cottage near the end of the point. Ralph Plumb of Des Moines bought the cottage about 1918 and still occupies it every season.

Point

Pocahontas point is one of the beauty spots of the lake region. The boats in foreground are on a favorite fishing spot.

Garlock platted Pocahontas point in the spring of 1908, and had it recorded April 27. He apparently purchased McEwen's interest at the same time, as the transfer is recorded as of July 16, 1908.

Dan Jeppeson purchased the farm land behind the lakeshore from the Garlock heirs, May 21, 1918, and that part is now known as the Jeppeson farm. That owner developed more of the area, including Milford beach. That property was platted and sold to Holcomb and Dailey of Milford and is now an exclusive family resort area on the north shore of the point, owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Jones.

Almost every lot on the point has a summer cottage or winter home on it. There is a good road branching off from the one through Terrace park and out to the blacktop at the south. Many cottages are now on the inner side of the road.

Pocahontas point is a portion of the town of West Okoboji and the town hall is there.

The Garlock summer home is now owned by a grandson, A. O. Garlock of Plover. He was formerly active in the Okoboji Yacht club. His grandfather had one of the first launches on the lake, "The Pocahontas."

"Would you like to sit in . . . ."

Dr. Green Developed Sandy Waste Land Into Lovely Terrace Park

Would you like to sit in a beautiful opera house and see a great drama of the lake region unfold before you?

Then come with me to Terrace park. We will sit in the shade of the trees in a park there while we look over the blue of West Okoboji to the backdrop of the sky and shores beyond, I'll tell you the story that is one of the most thrilling of all development projects on the Okobojis or Spirit lake.

Our seats will be a hillock that lacks only sixteen feet of being as high as the much-mentioned "high point" above Miller's bay, and that will be approximately 1,684 feet above sea level.

For our purpose, we take seats in the gallery of this great natural theater. Below us, row on row there lies the lower floor, the dress circle, the orchestra pit, and the stage which is the lake itself. The ceiling is the sky, the color and lighting is furnished by Dame Nature. For Terrace park is like unto a great opera house with the lake its stage.

The story — It includes many things that are not commonly known. Why? Possibly because the public scoffed so generally when the proposal was made that the sandy hills at the lower end of the lake could one day become a distinctive beauty spot. Perhaps, too, because the project was carried on so quietly and steadily that it became an accepted part of the lakes, without question. The beauty there now, however, was all planned and planted in one of the largest landscape projects in Iowa during the last century.

Because West Okoboji lake and its shores were declared the most beautiful place in the world by a Catholic priest who had traveled the world around and spent much time amid the beauties of Switzerland, we have Terrace park today.

The story begins in the summer of 1892, possibly 1893, when the Right Rev. Msgr. P. F. McGrath (who pronounced it McGraw) came to visit the Rev. Fr. J. L. Kirby of the Spencer and Milford parishes. The latter was then St. Patrick's. The Monsignor had retired as a professor in the seminary at Charles City and was approaching old age.

Naturally, being so near a lake and loving nature as he did, the visiting priest expressed a desire to see this lake of Iowa's, about which he had heard marvelous things. After morning Masses, the two priests were taken for a buggy ride by the late Dr. H. O. Green of Spencer. From Milford, they followed the road that wound over prairie and through woodlands, to Arnolds Park. Along the

way, they caught glimpses of the lake and at Arnolds Park could see across the lake for some miles along the shore.

"The most beautiful place in the world!" the monsignor declared with emphasis as he gazed long at the blue waters and the wooded lakeshore before him. Enroute back to Spencer, he expressed his desire to have a home on the lake and there to spend his last days. Before leaving for home, he instructed his hosts to buy some property for him.

Shortly afterward, Dr. Green learned that a tract of 160 acres, lying at the south end of the lake, could be purchased. The property itself had a story. It had been a part of the land bought some years before as right-of-way for a narrow gauge railway that was proposed from Des Moines to the lakes. There was considerable rivalry with the Milwaukee road as the right-of-way was built side by side along considerable distances. The Milwaukee got its tracks in first and the narrow-gauge railway was abandoned. Even today, however, the grades prepared for the right-of-way may be seen in many places parallel to the Milwaukee tracks.

When the railroad company abandoned its project, the land was parceled out to officials. The place at the south end of the lake went to a Mr. Johnston of Keokuk. Upon his death, the property was held until minor heirs reached majority. It was then released for sale, which happened to be a short time after Monsignor McGrath had been here.

A letter to the priest suggested that the property be purchased, suitable residence lots on the lakeshore retained, and the farm land sold. He replied at once that he would buy, on a half-and-half basis with Dr. Green.

An initial payment of $1,000 was made and in six months the balance of the purchase price of $8,000 was paid. Father McGrath visited his newly-acquired property and expressed his approval and delight at ownership of land on the beautiful lake.

Then he fairly confounded his partner by suggesting that they keep all of the property, have it landscaped, and offer it to summer visitors for a residence section. The idea was extremely absurd because the land was only a long sandy beach behind which rose a series of sand hills. There was not a tree in sight save at the outer edges of the beach. It wasn't even good farm land, it was just sand waste.

After much persuasion on the part of the priest, Dr. Green consented to have a landscape architect consider the idea. The parks engineer of Minneapolis, a friend of the Monsignor and a noted landscape architect, was summoned. He looked over the sandhills with their marvelous view of the lake, and gave vehement approval. Dr. Green, however, remained doubtful even after hearing the architect's comments and approving and paying his bill for $25 a day. The estimate was that work preliminary to the project would cost between $1,500 and $2,000.

The Monsignor insisted that the future of the place, as a summer residence section, was very bright. He finally talked Dr. Green into permission to bring a Mr. Reid, nationally-known landscape architect, here from Pittsburgh. He felt that Reid would be glad to turn thumbs down unless the idea had really fine possibilities.

Reid came, on contract for $100 a day and expenses from the east and return. He was taken to the property and without hesitation more than endorsed everything the Minneapolis man had said. Instead of staying the one day he expected, he stayed two because he liked the lake and the proposal before him.

Before returning home, the landscape engineer gave instructions for immediate procedure. Surveyors were to make a map showing the levels every 25 feet on the property. This, with the surveyors' notes, was to be sent to Reid who would personally draw the plan.

Johnson, of Spirit Lake, then county surveyor, was hired to make the survey. He and a helper worked all winter. The contour map was made for the property eighty rods back from the lakeshore. The bill was over $2,000. The map was sent to Reid and the landscape plan returned. Expenses by that time had reached a considerable sum.

About the time the landscape map returned to Iowa, Monsignor McGrath took a trip to Rome, expecting to return in six weeks. He left $1,000 to be used in laying out the roads. He became ill while in Italy and it was six months before he got home. He lived only a short time after that.

Meantime, Dr. Green had started the road-building and used all of the joint funds set aside for that purpose. With the death of the priest, he assumed the entire property and plan.

Terrace park was laid out without a straight street, for reason. The streets follow the low places in such a way that every lot has a view of the lake. Those that did not were made into roads and parks. There are four of the latter, each with a special plan.

Planting of trees and shrubs was a huge task, after the roads were laid out. Dr. Green ordered the trees — a carload of them. He set out every tree by himself, some 6,000 in all, and all of the shrubs.

The lilacs, long since one of the traditions of Terrace park in springtime, were set out by Dr. Green. They, too, have a story. He obtained them south of Spencer and tucked the very small young shoots into the back of his buggy — the kind that had a "catch-all" under the seat. He drove to Terrace park and planted the tiny little shoots in the park. While he worked, it started snowing and when he finished some of the first shoots were covered with snow. It was the right medicine, for every one of them grew and the lilacs are now a spring-time sight worth going miles to see.

The name of Terrace park was destined by nature's arrangement of the beach that is three-fourths of a mile long, and the rolling hills behind it.

The Casino

The Casino. Double door was entrance to bathhouse and stairways led to ballroom on second floor. Dancers enjoyed resting around the upper porches. Doors at left led to soda fountain and lunch. The oriental shop was at the far end of the building. The familiar statue, "The Young West" is in foreground. The building faces south. Williamz picture.

The new addition was opened to the public in 1905 when the first lots were offered for sale. Several years later Dr. Green imported some burrows from Colorado as attractions. Children were permitted to ride free. The attraction was successful in bringing people to the park, but the dozen burrows soon produced so many more that Dr. Green had to dispose of them all.

Another part of the history of Terrace park is the chapel. Before the death of Monsignor McGrath, he expressed a wish to establish a chapel near the lake as a gift to the Most Rev. Phillip Joseph Carrigan, then Bishop of Sioux City. A lot was set aside for this purpose. In 1911 the chapel was built, at the urging of the Catholic residents then of the summer population. One of the leaders in the movement for the chapel was the late Mrs. Ferdinand J. Smith of Miller's bay.

Sunday, Aug. 13, 1911, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Lake was dedicated by the Right Rev. Monsignor F. X. Deuerstein of LeMars, representing Bishop Carrigan. Assisting were the Rev. E. C. Meyers of Milford, the Rev. J. L. Kirby of Sioux City, and the Rev. A. E. Zimmerman of Sioux City who preached the dedicatory sermon.

Worshipers at the small chapel were carried to and from divine services every Sunday by the steamer "Okoboji" until the completion of St. Joseph's church in Milford in 1921. Coming of automobile traffic at the same time ended the service of the little chapel. During the winter of 1931 it was torn down and early in 1932 replaced by a modern cottage by the late Rev. E. C. Meyers of Milford.

The Casino, one of the finest summer amusement places between Chicago and the west coast, was built in 1923 by Dr. and Mrs. Green. It was located midway of the beach and across the road in what might be termed the orchestra pit of the park. Green's beach, known as the most perfect fresh water beach in America and comparable to those of Hawaii, was then widely publicized, and included a toboggan, beach umbrellas, and special attractions.

A large ballroom floor, opening onto wide verandas from which dancers had a view of the beautiful park at the south and the lake at the north, occupied the second floor. The ground floor housed a large bath and dressing rooms, check room, bath house laundry, water works, soda fountain, dining room, and gift shops. The building was 72 x 112 feet in size, of brick and steel construction with stucco exterior. It cost $25,000.

In 1931, in cooperation with the Rev. Father Meyers and W. H. Thomas of Spencer, a modern waterworks system was run into Terrace park from the Milford mains east of the area. The system was constructed at a cost of about $6,000 and provided for future connections for all lots in the area. The park had become a part of the incorporated town of West Okoboji, when that town was formed in 1925.

Dr. and Mrs. Green lived in their cottage on one of the hills and personally managed the big ballroom. They brought in many famous dance orchestras and saw their place become the most popular and the most crowded on the lake, although there had been dire predictions when the building was constructed. It was the usual theme, — nothing could survive away from the amusement park centers. But the Casino did survive and for many years was the most popular ballroom in the midwest.

east half of Terrace park. It made match sticks out of many cottages and leveled trees in a whole section. The grounds of the Casino building were damaged considerably but the building withstood the terrific winds. Property damage in the area was huge with almost nothing in condition to be reclaimed. Dr. Green was called to the area and personally aided in saving many of the huge trees that he had once set out as tiny saplings.

After the tornado, Terrace park had a forlorn air that was depressing to many who visited there. Wreckage was picked up for years and some is still visible. Some cottage owners simply sold their

Holiday Crowd

A holiday crowd at the Casino. Ballroom building in background. Refreshments stand in right foreground. Beach umbrella may be seen at center, left.

For one series of years the orchestras played evening out-door concerts to huge audiences in cars parked thickly into the area south and at the sides of the big building.

Tiger was one of the important facts of Terrace park and the Casino. He was a solemn-faced bulldog who personally supervised the goings-on at the Casino. He took up that duty when the building was erected and its lights first glimmered across the lake to the farthest shore.

Dr. Green once estimated that his personal investment in Terrace park was at least $200,000 and sales of cottage properties had not yet taken a major part of it out of his ownership. Cottages were built in the area every year and each was more modern and more beautiful than the last. All of that added to the general beauty of the area which had grown into a place with hundreds of trees of all kinds and shrubs and flowers on all sides.

Late in the afternoon of April 30, 1936, a tornado roared across the prairie from the southwest and ripped through the lots and didn't come back. Few of them cared to rebuild and the area was left rather desolate.

In this atmosphere, the Casino was reopened but the old spirit was gone, and Dr. and Mrs. Green made no effort to start from the beginning to bring back its popularity. It stood idle for several years.

The famous ballroom building and 27 acres of the choicest property in Terrace park, was given to the Catholic congregation of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette by Dr. and Mrs. Green. The deed was drawn about Dec. 1, 1938 and possession was given about a year later. Prior to the decision to give the property to a worthy religious order, they had contacted a number of such groups and finally chose the La Salette missionaries. The gift was given with the statement that "it is our hope that the property will help, at least in some small degree, to serve for the betterment of mankind."

The Green cottage was one of those leveled by the tornado.

"The founding of a new church . . . ."

Famous Casino Ballroom Made Over For La Salette Missionary College

The founding of a new church and a new educational institution of the Roman Catholic church, the La Salette Missionary college, was observed Monday morning, Sept. 29, 1941, with the most solemn rites of the church. The Most Rev. Edmond Heelan, D.D., Bishop of Sioux City, officiated and gave the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette the first public welcome from the Sioux City Diocese.

Dedication of the new chapel and college building, first of the La Salette Fathers in the midwest, was in sharp contrast to the evening in 1923 when a famous dance band played for the opening of the Terrace Park Casino to the pleasure-loving crowds of Iowa's Okoboji summer resort.

That evening there was gaity and laughter and music in pace with the modern world of entertainment. There was silence and quiet with the solemn intonations of the rituals of the blessing and the singing of a choir of black-robed Catholic priests of the Sioux City diocese, at the chapel dedication.

That night in 1923 there were throngs of well-wishers and holiday-makers congratulating Dr. and Mrs. H. O. Green on their fine achievement for the entertainment of the summer crowds with good music and good food. That Monday morning there were not so many, but those who came were quiet with the spirit of the occasion, priests and laymen, Catholics and Protestants, bringing congratulations and best wishes for the future of the college in its mission for the church.

The ceremony of the blessing began shortly after 9:30 o'clock and constituted the consecration of the building, especially the chapel, to the services of the church. Bishop Heelan, assisted by three of his officers, officiated at the ceremony in which the outside and inside of the chapel was blessed. The diocesian choir, directed by the Rev. H. B. Karloff of Royal, took part in the ceremonies.

Solemn Pontifical high mass was celebrated by Bishop Heelan, after the blessing of the inner walls. He was assisted by the Very Rev. Francis Kirby, M.S., of Bloomfield, Conn., a member of the general council of all provinces of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette, and the Very Rev. Paul Regan, M.S., of Bloomfield, Conn., provincial of the American province.

Officers of the mass were: Bishop Heelan, celebrant; the Right Rev. Monsignor Thomas Davern, Fort Dodge, arch priest; the Very Rev. Paul Regan, M.S., honorary subdeacon; the Rev. O. A. Dentlinger, Milford, deacon; the Rev. Michael Wendl, Spencer, subdeacon; the Right Rev. Monsignor Julius J. Berger, chancellor, Sioux City, first master of ceremonies; the Rev. Leo McCoy, Ayrshire, second master of ceremonies.

The diocesan choir sang during the mass. The preacher for the occasion was the Very Rev. William F. Mason, V.F., of Emmetsburg. Inferior ministers were altar boys from St. Joseph's parish at Milford.

In the sermon of the day, the Rev. Father Mason took for his text the scripture concerning the founding of a new church. He spoke of the way the Catholic church had carried on and had formed the basis of modern civilization by preserving Christianity against every destructive force. Through all of the years the church continued to teach, preach, and heal and spread the gospel of Christ crucified.

"The church has taught and must continue to teach," Father Mason said with reference to the La Salette college, "Till the sun is darkened and the stars fall.

First Lake Chapel

The Lady of the Lake chapel.

Remodeling

Picture taken during the rebuilding of the famous ballroom building into a seminary.

Today it is the one genuine international thing, boundaries mean nothing to the appeal of the church. It is the same to all regardless of color, condition, or boundary lines.''

Bishop Heelan spoke briefly to the priests and friends assmbled and extended the welcome of the diocese to the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. He recalled the day in 1938, at 20 below zero, when he and others first inspected the site with reference to the new foundation.

The bishop declared God is never limited in generosity and thanked Dr. and Mrs. Green and their son, Joseph of Chicago, for their generosity, and invoked a blessing upon them for the gift to the church.

Following the mass, the visiting priests from many parts of Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, were entertained at a dinner in the college dining room, served by the women of St. Joseph's parish.

Dedication of the new chapel and college marked the end of the era of summer resort pleasures of the Terrace Park Casino and the beginning of the Catholic congregation's new seat of learning.

The gift from Dr. and Mrs. Green was taken over late in November, 1939, and work began at once on remodelling and adapting the building to the needs of the Catholic missionary order. The supervision was in charge of the Rev. Joseph Balgenorth, M.S., Father Superior of the new seminary, and the Rev. Thomas Rush, M.S., who came with him from the east in 1939. They were also accompanied to the church by Brother Stephen, M.S., who contributed much in time and labor to the rebuilding.

The remodelled building was opened to the public Sunday, June 29, and at that time about 2,000 persons visited Terrace park and were shown through the place to see the changes that had been wrought in order to provide the needs of the college.

The first floor was made over completely. The west end was made into a beautiful chapel with altar at the north in an addition built especially for it. Doors to the chapel now open onto the wide south porch and an inner door opens into the lower hall.

The college dining room, kitchen, storage and utility rooms, a guest room, a parlor, priests' dining room, and the Father Superior's living quarters were built into the first floor. The woodwork was all duplicated to match the beautiful wood of the ballroom floor. One of the old staircases was retained, leading to the second floor, just inside the front doors that were a part of the Casino.

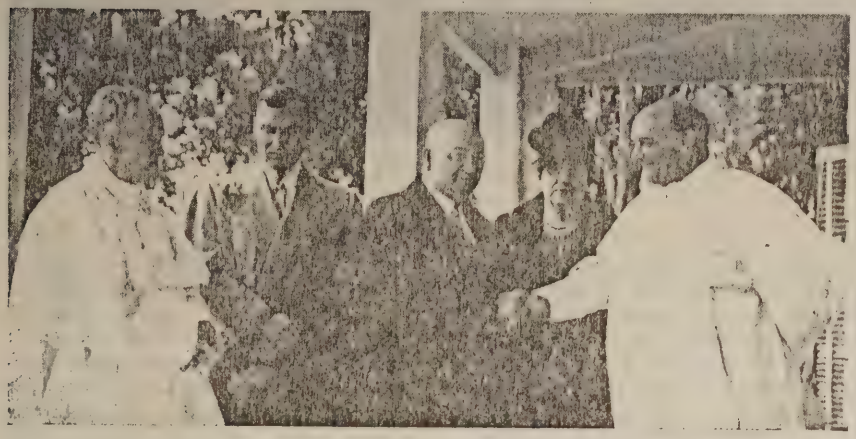
The upper floor was remodelled to provide two dormitory rooms on the west, class rooms, study halls, a hospital room, a library, and six bedrooms at the east end for the priests of the teaching staff. The wide upper porches were enclosed to provide maximum space for college and residential uses.

The entire building was redecorated, inside and outside, and the latest in equipment, wiring, and other conveniences and necessities were added. The chapel was finished in a soft cream-color with beautifully colored religious symbols. Above the altar was hung a most beautiful color replica of the ''Last Supper,'' done by Herman Luchtel of Milford. The beautiful altar railings, book cases, and other wood pieces were done on the job by Harry Pike of Hartley.

The grounds were enclosed with a white picket fence, the lawns filled and sodded, and the lakeshore enclosed in a fence and impoved with a large pier and bath house. A statue of Our Lady of La Salette was placed on the pedestal on which the famous statue ''The Young West'' stood during the Casino's heydays.

The new building was first used for a boys' camp during the summer of 1941, the first camp of its kind in the midwest. Students from the senior seminary at Al-

Dedication Day

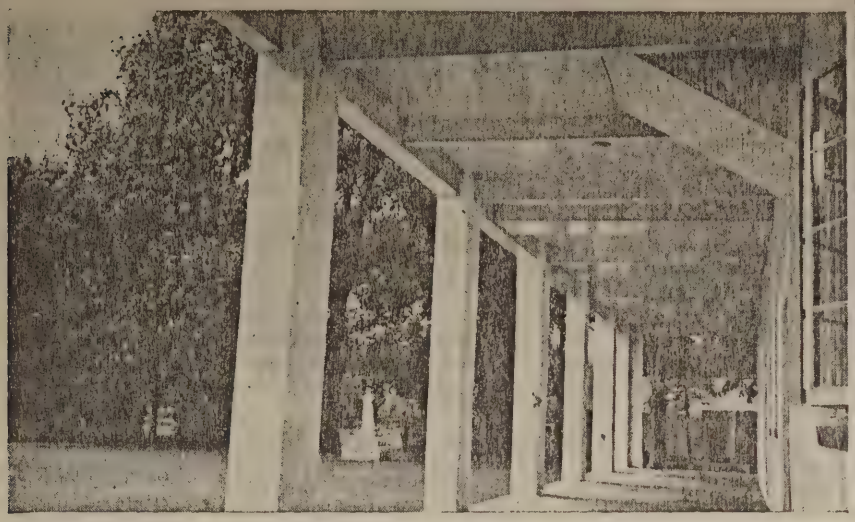


Dr. and Mrs. H. O. Green and their son Joseph, were among those attending the rites of dedication for the new seminary and chapel. In the picture, left to right: The Very Rev. Francis M. Kirby, M.S., a member of the general council of the LaSalette congregation; Joseph Green; Dr. and Mrs. Green; the Rev. Paul Regan, M.S., then provincial of the American congregation. Both Dr. Green and Father Regan are now dead.

Front Campus

The seminary, showing statue of Our Lady of La Salette in foreground. Second-floor porches were converted into rooms.

Seminary Porch



View toward southwest from front porch, showing statue.

tamont, N. Y., aided with the camp which was attended by some 200 boys from 6 to 17 years of age.

The first of the regular series of laymens' retreats was held at the new college September 12-13-14, 1941. Classes began September 16. Graduates of the four years of high school and two of college, will attend the novitate at Bloomfield, Conn., and the major seminary at Altamont before ordination in the missionary priesthood.

It was through the far-sighted dream of the late Monsignor P. F. McGrath, that Terrace park came into being. Church leaders point out that his idea of the present beautiful area was originated at about the time the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette sought refuge in the United States after internal troubles in France where the order was founded.

The Congregation of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette was founded May 1, 1852, by His Excellency, Philibert de Bruillard, Bishop of Grenoble, France, to perpetuate the devotion to the Blessed Mother of God in Her Holy Apparition at La Salette, September 19, 1846. There she appeared to two shepherd children and told them the world must turn from its wickedness back to Christ. Her final words were in the form of a command, "Well, my children, you will make this known to all my people."

The special purpose of the congregation is to "combat the crimes of the day," especially those deplored by the Blessed Mother in her appearance at La Salette.

The first permanent foundation, a preparatory college, was built in Hartford, Conn., in 1894, just as the Terrace park project was coming into reality. A novitiate was built at Bloomfield, Conn., in 1918 and a major seminary opened at Altamont in 1924, a year after the dedication of the Casino. The American province now includes about 170 priests and lay brothers.

The little chapel of Our Lady of the Lake, torn down some years ago, carried on the dream of Monsignor McGrath. The property is now a part of the La Salette holdings in Terrace park.

Until they came here in 1939, the La Salette Fathers were almost unknown in the midwest. Their work is primarily that of conducting missions, retreats, and the education of youths to the missionary priesthood. They work in any parish where their services are needed.

At the time of the dedication there were five priests in residence at Terrace park: The Rev. Father Balgenorth, M.S., Father Superior, the Rev. Thomas Rush, M.S., the Rev. John McGrath, M.S., the Rev. Gerald Bowen, M.S., and the Rev. Thomas Connors, M.S. The last two were added to the staff the beginning of the school year as instructors.

(Note: Father McGrath was killed in an automobile accident near Hartley, November 20, 1941, as three of the priests from Terrace park were returning from Sioux City. Father Rush entered the army as a chaplain in June, 1943, and served several years overseas in Italy, France, and Germany. Father Balgenorth entered the navy as a chaplain in April, 1944, and was sent to the South Pacific with a fleet marine force after the war.

(The college was turned into the congregation's school of philosophy at the beginning of the college year 1943. Due to a shortage of priests to teach in two junior seminaries, as there had been many enlistments, the Milford junior seminary was combined with that at Hartford, Conn., and the local students transferred there. At the same time, the young men at the Altamont, (N. Y.) senior seminary who were ready for the study of philosophy, were brought here. They remain two years in residence here and then return to Ipswich, Mass., to complete their study for the La Salette priesthood.)

Seminary Chapel

Interior view of chapel.

"Although the first religious . . . ."

Churches Grew from Frontier Service In Gardner Log Cabin, 1857

Although the first religious service in Dickinson county was held in the Gardner log house May 11, 1857, in charge of a Methodist Episcopal preacher, the Calvary Methodist church in Arnolds Park is the youngest established Protestant church in the county.

The church was organized October 6, 1927, a little more than seventy years after the first Methodist church service in the community, and many years after the Methodist circuit preachers visited this county to hold services in homes and school houses.

When the first church was erected in Arnolds Park, it was built by the Society of Friends. That church was organized by the Rev. Jacob Hinshaw and his wife, Hannah, August 6, 1892. The building was completed and dedicated free of debt in 1895. The bell for calling worshipers to meeting, was donated by the Ladies Lakeside club, one of the pioneer women's clubs of the county.

During the fifty years the Friends church has served the community, there have been only eleven preachers. The order of succession is recorded: The Rev. Mr. Hinshaw and his wife, 1892 to 1895; the Rev. Mary R. Hornaday, 1895 to September 1904; the Rev. James B. Pickford, September 1904 to September 1905; Dr. Philip Slack, (physician and preacher), October 1905 to September 1908; the Rev. Grace M. Elliott, September 1908 to August 1914; the Rev. Ernest L. Gregory, August 1914 to August 1918; the Rev. Waldo H. Reece, August 1918 to September 1922; the Rev. Charles T. Moore, 1922 to 1924; the Rev. Waldo H. Reece, 1924 to 1930; the Rev. Theodore Foxworthy, 1930 to 1935; the Rev. J. Paul Hadley, 1935 to 1940; the Rev. Lawrence Sams and his wife, the Rev. Sarabelle Sams, 1940.

In 1917 the church building was remodelled, at which time the large hall elected some years before by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, was combined with the old church building into a new and modern church plan. It was completed in 1922 and served for many years as a community center.

The W.C.T.U. hall was unique among buildings. It stood on the corner south of the schoolhouse and had a large auditorium, stage, and kitchen. The entire community could, and did, gather there for suppers, New Years' day parties, and town and school theatricals. The building was used to form the auditorium of the new church, and a basement room was reserved for W.C.T.U. use, in exchange for the gift of the building.

In March, 1925, the Lake Okoboji Community church was organized and there was subsequently erected a large summer tabernacle near the lakeshore at The Villa, where all church activities were held. The organizer was the Rev. R. Lee Kirkland and during his pastorate here a Community church magazine, "Pioneer

Early Church Gathering

Friends church group, about 1904.

of a New Era'' was published here. A number of pastors succeeded him but the community church idea was not strong enough to hold and the church was practically abandoned in the fall of 1927.

Members of the Community church and others petitioned the Northwest Iowa Methodist conference in 1927 for a church in Arnolds Park. The Rev. Edgar Hammerle was appointed pastor and continued to serve until the fall of 1939 when the Rev. C. K. Hudson was sent to this charge and the Rev. Mr. Hammerle went to the South Dakota conference.

The Calvary Methodist church is of unusual design, bungalow style with cemented rock foundation, finished with stained shingles. The basement is used as Sunday school, community, and dining room space. There is a large fireplace and stage there. The parsonage is directly south, of the same style architecture. Both buildings were designed and built by the Rev. Mr. Hammerle who was a contractor and builder.

The new church was located on property bought in the fall of 1927 from the Parker family, along Highway 71, equally convenient to residents of both Arnolds Park and Okoboji. The land cost $7,000. The building was dedicated in August, 1928, by Frank E. Mossman, former president of Morningside college. The present church property is valued at $24,000.

The buildings were completed in 1932, and show much of the Rev. Mr. Hammerle's hobby of stonework and at the same time make the buildings distinctive among Methodist holdings in northwest Iowa.

In October, 1932, a special Sunday service of the Methodist church was held in the Gardner log cabin, in connection with the fifth anniversary of the Calvary church and in commemoration of the first religious service held by the Methodists in Dickinson county.

That first service was attended by a group of men who had arrived a month before, come to dare nature and the Indians to wipe out a second pioneer community founded on the shores of the Okoboji lakes.

The Rev. J. S. Prescott, a Methodist preacher, was in charge of the first service. His text was from I Kings, "Be strong and show thyself a man.'' History recorded, also, that the hymn sung that morning was "A Charge to Keep I Have.''

A quartet opened the service in October, 1932, and the Rev. H. E. Hutchinson of Spencer, pastor of the Grace Methodist church there, preached the memorial sermon from the text used by the Rev. Mr. Prescott. The Rev. Mr. Hutchinson praised the faith of pioneers in their God and the power He gave them to carry them past the horrors that lay ahead in the wilderness. He said "It is about time we had some of

First Church

The original Friends church and parsonage, about 1895.

Friends Church

The enlarged Friends church and parsonage. Original building is shown as the wing, with the W. C. T. U. hall as the auditorium.

Methodist Church

Calvary Methodist church.

the faith of the pioneer to face the problems and overcome the obstacles of today in the spirit of idealism."

Prior to the sermon, those older residents of the county were called upon to give reminiscenses of the early days. The late Mrs. Henry (Ella) Arthur of Spirit Lake recalled attending church in the Thatcher cabin and that men plowed on Jan. 1, 1858, without mittens.

Mrs. Sam Holcomb of Milford, a daughter of James W. Sperbeck who arrived in 1868, recalled attending the "black schoolhouse," so called because the outside was covered with tar paper, and of the sermons of the Rev. W. W. Mallory.

Mrs. Frank Elston of Okoboji, whose father arrived in 1858, recalled the Methodist camp meetings held on Pillsbury's point in the early days when she, as a child, kept a watchful eye on the dark woods at the rear, half expecting to hear the war cry ring in her ears as it did in the ears of that other little girl twenty years before. She spoke of a wedding in the Gardner cabin upon the golden wedding day of the Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Pillsbury whose home it was, and of the lilacs and roses that were once outside the Gardner log house.

It was also recalled by Mrs. Elston that an early-day evangelist, Chaplain Lozier, urged the people to buy a tract of land for the Lord, "for the time will come, brethren, when either the Lord or the devil will have a strong hold on this place . . . ."

E. A. Case of Milford recalled having spent the night in the death cabin many times during the days it was the Pillsbury home. The late Richard Harker of Spirit Lake recalled sitting beside the aged Indian Chetzenmaza at the dedication of the monument and that the Indian was too nervous to stand in acknowledgement of the applause given him. Mr. Harker was then a member of the famous Harker quartet.

Miss Kate M. Smith, daughter of R. A. Smith who was first to return after his experience in the relief expedition, recalled that as a child Mrs. Pillsbury's gentle friendliness transformed the house of horror into a shrine of beauty. Curious school children from the school a block away, approached the cabin at noon and recesses, to gaze with awe and curiosity.

Mrs. Arthur recalled sermons by Brother William Preston and Brother Upton, delivered in the courthouse in Spirit Lake in 1869.

A letter from the late Mrs. A. O. Stevens, unable to be present, recalled John O'Farrell, Grandfather Arnold, and James Helms as the faithful three among early-day church attendants.

The commemorative service was held in the afternoon, cool and frosty, and attended by about 100 persons, pioneers and children of pioneers. The service was held upon special invitation of A. L. Sharp, grandson of the late Abbie Gardner Sharp, then owner of the cabin.

"The entire span of education . . . ."

First School Started in Arnolds Park Family's Log Cabin, 1858

The entire span of education in Dickinson county has been enacted in Arnolds Park. The first school taught in the county was in a room of the home occupied by the Rev. J. S. Prescott family. That was in the fall of 1858 and Miss Amanda Smith, sister of R. A. and M. J. Smith, of Okoboji, was the teacher.

The home was located on the site later occupied by the Arnolds Park hotel for nearly fifty years. Children who attended were from the neighborhood, and the Prescotts. The home owner paid the teacher.

The school continued until the spring of 1860 and in the winter of 1862-63, the first public school was started. Miss Myra Smith, sister of Miss Amanda, was the teacher. School was held in the original Harvey Luce cabin near where the Majestic rink now stands.

In the summer of 1864, school was held in the large Prescott barn and taught by Miss Esther Pillsbury. The next winter the school children assembled at the Gardner log cabin where a leanto had been built. It was then occupied by the Rev. and Mrs. S. L. Pillsbury and the school was taught by Miss Syrena Pillsbury.

Prescott then donated a frame building, 16x20 feet in size, for school and church purposes, providing the district would remove it to a proper site and finish it for school use. For some reason, the moving began but was not finished until the Prescott home burned. The building then became the Prescott home.

During the summer of 1865, a subscription was taken and material and labor were donated for a school building. It was of native lumber, 20x30 feet in size, and 10 feet high. The walls were at first bricked up instead of being lathed and plastered. The building was used for school, church, and all community purposes. It was located near the present Sherburne residence in the south part of town, was later converted into a cottage on Pillsbury's point.

Meantime, the children of school age on the Okoboji side of the community, were transferred to a school in Center Grove, north of the settlement. The second school site there is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Emerson, opposite the lakes airport.

1898 School

The large big schoolhouse built in 1898.

The year after Arnolds Park became a town, a lot was chosen in the center of the grove and a new and beautiful building was erected for school purposes. It was two stories high, built at a cost of $1,850 from Mississippi pine brought here for the purpose.

Only the two lower rooms and the hall were finished for school and it was a good many years before the upper rooms were finished for class use. The building was heated by a furnace and was then the last word in schoolhouses. The upper rooms were used for community affairs, dramatic presentations, box socials, and the library.

Another expansion of the school provided one of the upper rooms for school use, and then the second upper room was finished when enough pupils had reached high school age and had grown past the curriculum in force. The lower grades were divided between the two lower rooms and the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades occupied the south upper room. The high school proper occupied the north upper room.

A class was graduated from the tenth grade at one time but the first class to be graduated from the twelfth grade was made up of only two members, Vivian Butler and Earl Miguel in 1914. Another class of two graduates followed in 1915, and since that time the classes have been graduated regularly and have increased in size proportionatly to the growth of the community.

A new brick school house was built in 1914 at a cost of over $40,000 and provided the latest in modern arrangement and equipment. There were fourteen rooms, toilets, a gymnasium and dressing rooms. It was built directly behind the former building.

The frame structure was moved, half at a time, to a location in the business district and converted into a hotel. It was burned in September, 1932, on the site between the present Briardale store and the former bank building. Cause of the fire was never established. The lower floor was occupied by several shops at the time.

Prior to the erection of the brick school house, the independent school district had united with outlying country districts in a consolidation. That again brought the Okoboji children to this educational center.

Attendance figures advanced so rapidly that the building expected to care for the needs of the school for many years, was outgrown in less than twenty years and two grades were transferred to an annex building that had been the home of the A. J. Yearous family. Attendance reached above the 300 mark at that time.

A large addition to the building was erected immediately in front of the structure in 1939, at a cost of some $45,000. Of that amount, $25,000 was in school bonds and the remainder was a grant from the Works Progress Administration. The new addition is one story high at the east and two stories at the west, housing the gymnasium-auditorium, dressing rooms, and the first and second grade rooms and toilet facilities. The design and brick of the old building was duplicated and remodelling of the first building completed to make an entirely new school plant. A garage was also built to house the new school buses, and a splendid athletic field was graded and leveled at a location east of the cemetery, a half block south of the schoolhouse. In the general plan of rebuilding, the school lawns were graded and sodded and new walks built.

The new addition was dedicated at a program held there Thursday evening, Nov. 16, 1939, at which time George Paradise of Sioux City, then state commander of The American Legion and later a district court judge, was the speaker. He came to America an immigrant boy from the island of Crete and earned his way to the top of the law profession and to great public honor and respect. Mr. Paradise said "I would rather be the humblest worker in America, than to be any kind of worker of any other country in the world," when he spoke of the part America had in the world. His address gave those who heard him a new pride in being Americans and gave the school a new goal to reach toward in building true Americans.

Members of the board at that time were: W. M. Christenson, president; Dr. T. L. Ward, Tom Olson, Elmer Nielson, Fred Wilson, and Clifford (Bill) Aitchison, secretary. D. C. Mackintosh was superintendent of schools.

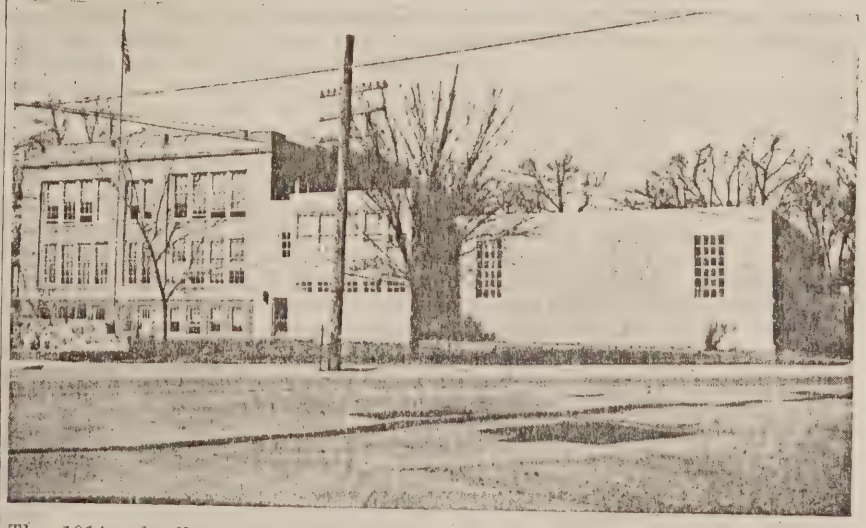
School Became Hotel

The schoolhouse became a hotel after the brick schoolhouse was built in 1914. It was sawed in two and moved in two pieces to a site on the main street. The building burned in 1930 and has not been replaced. It stood between what is now the Briardale store and the one-time bank building.

1914 School

The 1914 schoolhouse.

Present School



The 1914 schoolhouse with gymnasium-auditorium and additional classrooms.

"Only yesterday . . . ."
Autumn on West Okoboji

Only yesterday—dancing feet were rushing past those of slower tread seeking all that a day might hold. Today—there is abject dreariness. A wet wind, west by northwest, howls down the lake sweeping its blue waters into a frenzy as it comes. A bathing float has flung itself upon the beach crying its loneliness for the pressure of a swimmer at its side.

Rusting hinges, swinging dusty signs proclaiming "Hamburgers 10c" may be obtained, protest the desolation. A dance-hall placard flaps uselessly from a telephone pole. Dry leaves, playfellows loosed from towering oaks, rattle as they whirl and eddy between shuttered concession stands. Two iron rings clank dismally, affirming the silence that followed laughter of many children. Chairs piled in a sheltered nook of a hotel porch, a rendezvous of spiders, await the snows of tomorrow.

Silence, borne by the wet wind and rustling leaves, has swept aside the memory of dancing feet that played there so short a space before. A lone watcher, cuddled in the lap of a hollow tree, motionlessly follows the flying clouds, almost lulled to slumber by the broken rhythm of the waves lashing and kissing the sands so lately wooed by the summer suns.

Yesterday was summer. Today is cold, damp autumn. (1929)

Winter At The Park

Beginning of winter in the amusement park, looking toward the hotel. Picture about 1920. Note the original "Red's Place", prior to that the "Happy Corner".

"After a struggle of . . . ."
"Okoboji Association" Founded in 1902
First Brought Books to Lakes

After a struggle of thirty years, the Arnolds Park library came into its proper place in the community when it was installed in the beautiful rooms of the new municipal building.

An old record book which found its way back to the library after an absence of a quarter century or more, gives an interesting insight into the attempts of the first citizens here to establish a cultural center.

The Associated Library association of Arnolds Park was organized early in 1902, according to the old book. The group began under the name "Okoboji Association" and continued as such for six months, adopted by-laws and rules "to form it on a more solid basis with the end in view of a town library." It was to be known as the Arnolds Park library.

The regular meetings of the association "shall be held at the library room on Tuesday evening on or before the full moon of each month", so says the old record book and names Monday and Friday as library days from 2 to 5 p.m. Membership was 25 cents per year and a signature on the membership role. Robert's Rules of Order were to be official. A quorum was seven members. A complete list of officers, librarians, and managers was named.

The membership role constitutes one of the most interesting pages in the old record book. There are names of persons still residents and active citizens and others who have long since gone their way:

Ella A. Stevens (Mrs. O. A.), Mrs. E. M. Aspey, Mrs. A. A. Henderson, Mrs. Grant Allen, Miss Winifred Yorker, C. W. Manning, Mrs. Bertha Allen, Miss Edna Allen, Miss Winifred Henderson, Roy Smith, Mrs. Wood Allen, J. E. Allen, Mrs. Mary A. Hornaday, Allie M. Hinshaw (Mrs. Elmer), A. A. Henderson, Mrs. Emma Hallet, Raymond McCoy, Miss Beth Allen, Mrs. Louisa Bailey (Mrs. John), R. A. Smith, L. J. Chrisman, Mrs. A. E. Carlton, Purl Walters, Mrs. Mae O'Farrell (Mrs. E. E.), Albert Hawks. Of that number Miss Yorker, Mr. Manning, and Mr. McCoy were teachers.

The first president of the association seems to have been Miss Yorker who was followed by Mrs. Stevens. She held office a short time and was succeeded by Mrs. A. A. (Fon) Henderson who, according to the record, retained the office for some years. Miss Yorker was librarian at the time. Mrs. Bertha Allen's name is also recorded as librarian during the first few months. Later the name of Miss Winifred Henderson appears.

In May, 1903, Mrs. Hallet became librarian with Miss Henderson and Miss Edna Allen, assistants. That fall Mr. McCoy succeeded Miss Henderson as assistant. Mrs. Hallet was Mrs. Arnold's sister.

The minutes include much discussion of the purchase and price of books, the ordering and returning of books from the Iowa Traveling library, of donated books, fines, and fees paid. There is also mention of various social functions held for the purpose of raising money for the library. These included a supper at an ice cream parlor, netting $8.45; a supper at the Arnolds Park hotel, netting $16.07; and a supper at Henderson's, netting $7.25.

At the close of the school year in 1903, the library was transferred to the

A. A. Henderson home for the summer months. Officers elected that May included: Mrs. Henderson, president; Mrs. Hornaday, vice president; Mrs. Bailey, secretary; L. Crisman, treasurer; and Miss Henderson, assistant librarian.

The last record in the old book is of a meeting February 25, 1905, called to decide the question of sending to Des Moines for more books.

Mrs. E. E. O'Farrell, one of the original members of the library association, recalls that the books were taken from the A. A. Henderson home at the time the family moved to the west. They were placed in the old W.C.T.U. hall and were in charge of that association for some time. At the time the new school building was erected in 1914, or shortly afterward, the books were returned to the schoolhouse where they were added to the school library.

In 1924, the library was again opened to the public, a room having been set aside for that purpose in the schoolbuilding. Miss Helen Orr was librarian, assisted by Miss Winona Russell. Regular hours were established.

The temporary library building, constructed out of a cottage at Gateswood, was established by the town after the death of Mrs. Martha Gates who bequeathed the corner lot in the Gateswood addition to the town for a library site. Mrs. Gates made the provision that a permanent building be erected within a certain space of time or the lot should become forfeited.

When the town council determined upon the three-in-one plan for the town building, the library board agreed to the plan and sold the library site and frame building to the Gates heirs. The library fund, amounting to about $5,000, was turned over to the town for the library space in the new town hall building.

At the present time Miss Inez Elston is librarian, having taken that position when the temporary building was opened in November, 1926. The library contains some 2,000 volumes besides many old volumes not catalogued for regular use. A large number of books are donated annually by local and cottage residents. Two of the largest donations were from the late D. W. Dickinson of Des Moines, and the late Mr. and Mrs. A. O. Stevens.

Library hours are 2 to 5 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday. The average circulation is 100 books each day. Summer visitors are also granted the privileges of the library while in residence.

First Library

The first library building, a cottage donated by Mrs. Gates.

"One of the largest sanitary . . . ."

Lakes Sanitary Sewer System Million-Dollar Project Finished 1939

One of the largest sanitary construction projects in Iowa, finished in the fall of 1939 by the Works Progress Administration, provides sewer and water connections for hundreds of cottages and homes in the Okoboji-Spirit lake region.

The million-dollar project, financed by the State of Iowa and the federal government, was started Nov. 8, 1937 and the first unit put into operation in November, 1939. Within several months' time the Okoboji town unit was added to the system.

The huge system was provided by special act of the Iowa General Assembly in 1937. Over 600 men were employed on the project and the estimated four-year construction period was cut in half.

W. P. Woodcock of Spencer, then a member of the former Iowa Board of Conservation, first presented the idea of a huge sewer system for the lakes, in 1933. He outlined a plan before several lakes groups and received no encouragement. Nobody objected to the idea itself but they called it a pipe dream.

The main objection was the cost, principally because the sanitary problem was created solely by the influx of summer vacationers and the cost of such a system to serve only a few months a year was prohibitive for Dickinson, smallest land area county in Iowa. Most people declared frankly that such a system must eventually be built.

At about the time the project first came up for general discussion, scientists from the Iowa Lakeside laboratory declared the increased growth of obnoxious algaes in the Okoboji lakes was probably due to nitrates constantly flowing into them from the Spirit Lake and Arnolds Park disposal plants, into the upper end of East Okoboji and Lake Minnewashta.

There was constant agitation about the situation and numerous plans were offered for clearing the lakes of algae. Nothing was done, although it was generally conceded that if the growth kept on for a period of time, the lakes would be destroyed.

The project was taken up by the Okoboji Protective association, organized in 1905 by cottage owners for mutual property protection and preservation of the lakes. The late E. M. Badgerow of Sioux City was then president. He supervised a sanitary survey with subscribed funds, in 1936. The engineers found the plan feasible. The preliminary work was investigated by the Iowa WPA, approved, and that agency agreed to build the system.

The association took the matter to the Iowa legislature and that body voted $150,000 for the project and designated the State Conservation Commission its legal agency. The Okoboji Protective association had meantime formed a committee to handle legal phases of the project as its sponsor. The committee

provided the necessary information, plans, and application for federal funds.

The state hired the Currie Engineering company of Webster City and a new survey was made and plans completed. Principle change was the addition of a sewage disposal plant for treatment of all lakes waste.

After work on the main ditch, approximately eight miles long from the south shore of Spirit lake to a point on the Little Sioux river south of Arnolds Park, state and federal approval was made of a water and sewer system for the Okoboji town section of West Okoboji lake. Work was done in conjunction with that of the main ditch. Towns of Arnolds Park and Spirit Lake hooked onto the big ditch in October, 1939, and Okoboji the following spring.

The original plan, as presented to the General Assembly, called for sewer and water all the way around West Okoboji lake and the southern half of Spirit lake. Completion of the first half through the most heavily populated districts used the money appropriated and because of the financial burden on the state, the remainder of the work was temporarily abandoned.

The main sewer cost approximately $450,000 and the Okoboji system an additional $324,000. Together they serve hundreds of year-around and summer homes in the three towns.

The treatment plant is one of the most important parts of the system. It covers an area of a nine-acre plot at the lower end of the huge ditch and is operated by sewer gas. It was designed especially for the needs of this region, capable of caring for wastes for fifty years. The construction is said to be of the finest and the laboratory the best outside the city of Des Moines. It is operated under stringent Iowa Department of Health rules.

The main ditch has five miles of tributaries emptying into it from the Okoboji town section. Connections there provide for all cottages and building sites in the areas covered. Approximately 100 connections were made while the main ditches were still under construction.

Operation of the big system is by gravity flow with several lift stations along the main line and in Okoboji. These were made necessary because of the topography of the region.

The town of Okoboji takes its water from West Okoboji lake south of The Inn hotel. Arnolds Park obtains water from a point near Pillsbury's point. The town of Milford, which had its system recently rebuilt, gets water at the south end of the lake. These three systems are expected to eventually supply water for the entire West Okoboji lake area. Spirit Lake's water supply comes from Spirit lake.

The completed plan calls for a sewer and water branch across Terrace park

The Sewer Starts

WPA workmen begin the big sewer at the south end. November, 1937.

Laying Tile

The big shovel goes through the deep cut south of Arnolds Park.

Going Up The Hill

Work progresses up the hill at Okoboji.

and around West Okoboji lake to a point near Triboji beach on the northwest, and a continuation of the Okoboji town ditch to and including the Methodist Camp Grounds on the northeast shore.

The system is operated by a board as designated by the act of the legislature, made up of representatives from lake region towns affected by the sewer. Each town contributes its share of the proportionate expense. General supervision remains with the State Conservation Commission. Harley Spragg of Arnolds Park, one of the construction engineers, was retained as superintendent.

Practical value of the system was demonstrated in December, 1940, when fire broke out early in the morning in the unoccupied Dixon beach cottage section, north of Fort Dodge point. The wind was just right to make a clean sweep across the point to the lake on the south.

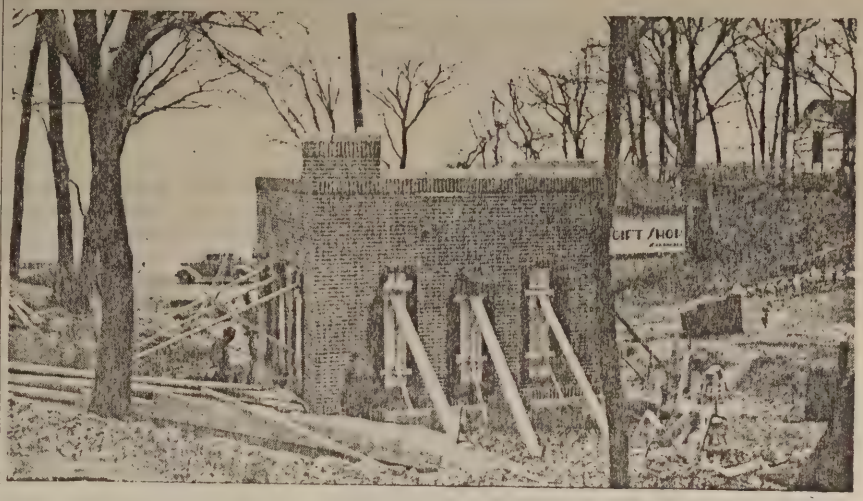
In spite of aid brought by Arnolds Park and Spirit Lake fire departments, the fire could not have been controlled that morning without an adequate supply of water. The ice on the lake was not thick enough to hold the pumper engines and there was no other means of getting water enough to stop the fire. At least 25 summer and winter homes would have been destroyed before the fire could burn itself out. Okoboji now has its own volunteer department and some equipment, augmented by the engines (one a pumper) from Arnolds Park.

Adequate sanitary and water systems in the lake region also meant much toward building up the areas served. Many new and expensive summer homes have been built in the Okoboji area as a result of the sanitary and fire protection. Year-around occupancy of many of the fine summer residences has also resulted. The same result is also cutting down materially on the winter thievery problem that was once large in the lake region.

Although Iowa Lakeside Laboratory scientists withhold comment, residents of the Okoboji section declare the sewage system has already done considerable toward clearing up the lake and toward their ultimate preservation. For many years the stench of rotting algaes was almost unbearable at times on the Okoboji side and contributed considerable toward loss of business there.

During the seasons of 1940 and 1941, the odors were not bothersome and the waters of the Okobojis at the bridges had been noticeably clearer. Residents there believe the huge sewer system which stopped the dumping of treated sewage into the lakes, is largely responsible for the improved conditions and lessening of growths of the obnoxious algaes, and predict continued improvement.

Pumping Station

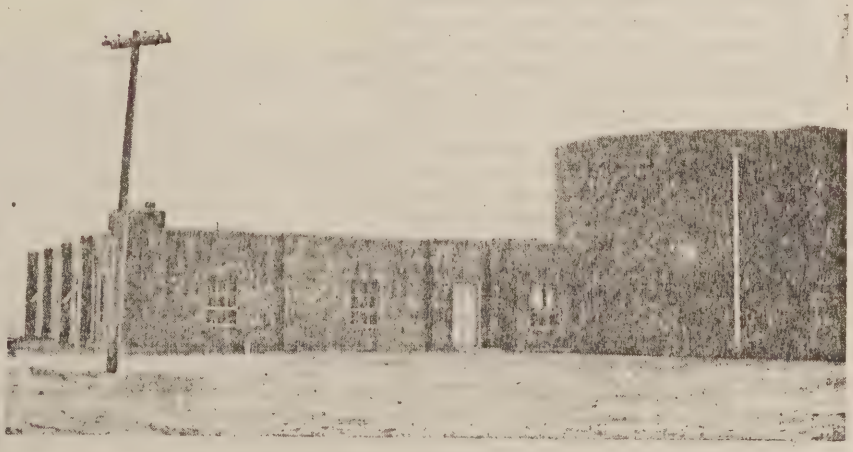


The pumping station near The Inn is nearing completion.

End Of The Line

The huge disposal plant takes form. Outlet from the lake is shown in background.

Disposal Plant



The disposal plant, 1939.

"The Okoboji lake region grabbed . . . . ."

Boat Accident in 1929 Again Grabbed Headlines of the Nation

The Okoboji lake region grabbed black headlines all over the nation on the morning of July 29, 1929, when the seasled "Miss Thriller" was rammed and went to the bottom taking nine persons to their deaths. It was the worst lakes tragedy of modern times.

It was dusk, just before 9 o'clock on Sunday evening, July 28, when the boat sped out from the dock at Arnolds Park, skimming the water and cutting the cool breezes as it had on hundreds of previous trips. The boat, powered by airplane motors, had been brought to the lake in 1925 and added to the motorboat line for a speed thrill. On that fatal trip, the "Miss Thriller" carried fifteen passengers, and was driven by Frank Long and Jap Alexander, both experienced with motors and familiar with the lakes.

Out of the murky dusk came a light, a crash, a splintering. There were frantic cries for help and the motorboat "Zipper", of a rival line, loomed up in the darkness, also crippled. It was still afloat and the seasled slipped backward into the water spilling her cargo.

Only six of those on board the "Thriller" came back from the ride. One body was recovered that night. Eight more were brought to the surface Monday.

Stark tragedy strode through the Sunday night crowd that lined the shore at Arnolds Park as soon as the crash was heard and frantic calls for help were wafted across the waters. There were few boats on the lake at that hour of indefinite light. Those few rushed toward the sound of the cries, about a half-mile south of The Inn hotel. Other boats put out from shore, not knowing what to expect for there had never been such a disaster on the lakes since white men put boats into the waters.

News of the catastrophe swept like a tidal wave through the crowds in the amusement parks, around the shores of the lakes abroad into the countryside. Pleasure parties sought some of their members. Parents sought children. Some were found, others were sought until dawn brought grim reality.

There was no one able to give a connected account of the disaster. Those trying to untangle the facts were brought again and again against the fact that no record was kept of such boat trips. Names were unknown and an accurate check was impossible. It was finally ascertained that fifteen persons rode on the "Miss Thriller" and that eight persons, including two children, were on the "Zipper."

With the daylight, individuals and crews of men were on the waters south of The Inn, seeking to locate the bodies of those known to be missing.

Those watching from the shore at Arnolds Park and The Inn became hundreds and thousands, milling about, seeking accurate information. None was able to give it. Out on the lake the small rowboats with the grim men rowing them, went slowly back and forth, back and forth. Now and then a faster boat was summoned and then dashed for shore and a waiting ambulance. Eight bodies were found, in the deepest part of the lake, and eight bodies were taken ashore while the rowboat continued to move slowly up and down, up and down.

Late Monday afternoon, officials and searchers felt reasonably sure they had found all of the bodies and the grim toll was nine.

The day's hours each added to the tale of tragedy. Missing friends were sought. Parents, living in other towns, came to the waterfront to find the awful doubt dispelled, or reality.

The Thriller

The Thriller, just recovered from lake.

There was a locked coupe, through the windows of which a girl's jacket and man's hat could be seen. The boy and girl were out in the lake. She was the girl known for hours merely as "the girl in red" who had clung to the lights of the doomed boat and gone down with it.

A woman, worn out and tearless because the tears were all gone, was among the watchers grimly posted at the docks with eyes turned toward the west. She and her husband had come for a day and had gone for a cooling ride before starting home. He was an expert swimmer and had clung to her. She had fought him off out there in the dark, to save his life, and he had gone down with his arm outstretched in a stroke. During the long hours of that afternoon, they brought him back to her.

There was the lad who gave his life preserver to a floundering woman and treaded water with a young companion until help came. And a third companion, who was brought ashore next day.

A party of four young persons on a church houseparty embarked with gay spirits. Only one came back to answer for the four. A farmer boy, whose greatest delight was to ride the fast boat, died out there alone in the dark.

Telephone lines were taxed beyond capacity with calls bearing news of safety and sorrow to loved ones throughout the state, and to newspapers throughout the nation.

The milling hundreds, all eyes gazing toward the group of boats away out on the water, sensed the tragedy with an utter lack of comprehension; bowed with the truth as the ambulance made successive trips from the lakefront.

For days thereafter, rumors of missing persons lent to the tragic story, even though a check as accurate as possible had been made before the boats stopped work on the lake.

The dead were: Esther Rehnstrom, 22, Alta; Melvin Kroenick, 21, Everly; Luella Adams, 17, Everly; Milo Nelson, 25, Linn Grove; Thomas Christian, 25, Linn Grove; Neil B. Gelino, 11, Arnolds Park; Floyd Cummings, 45, Wabaso, Minn.; Henry Heinz, 54, Harris; John Steinke, 15, Everly.

The cause of the tragedy, next in proportion in this region to the Indian massacre, was attributed to the rivalry between speed boat lines. "The Zipper" was owned by the Eagle Boat line and was piloted by Harold Yarnes of Spirit Lake. Alexander and Long worked for an independent company.

Immediately after the crash, state and county officials brought action against the Eagle Boat line owners, John and Milo Hartman, and Yarnes, on second degree murder charges. Preliminary hearing was before Justice of the Peace C. W. Price, in Spirit Lake. The cases were dismissed.

Action was taken to call a special grand jury. Exactly a month after the crash, the jury returned five indictments: Pilots Yarnes and Alexander, and Long, on charges of manslaughter; and the Hartmans for conspiracy.

Responsibility or cause of the accident was never fixed. The charges against Yarnes were dismissed for lack of evidence. Long and Alexander were not tried. Milo Hartman was tried in Dickinson county and convicted. Later the case was re-tried in Pocahontas county and the verdict was directed for the defendant. The supreme court once upheld the local court and in the second appeal dismissed the case.

An unsuccessful attempt was made in in the winter of 1929-30 to raise the seasled through the ice. The boat, as it lay on the lake bottom, was purchased by two Milford men. They hired Capt. H. H. Thompson and son John, of Duluth, Minn., experienced deep sea divers, to come here in June, 1930, to help raise the boat.

Captain Thompson found the seasled in 96 feet of water, the greatest depth at which he had ever worked. He strung cables around the hull where it rested upside down with the motors in the mud.

Several days' time was required to loosen the boat and pull it to the surface with a windlass on the steamer "Queen." It was then dragged to the Terrace park shore and pulled onto the beach at noon, July 4, 1930. A huge crowd saw the last of the operations and the novelty of the diver at work.

The seasled was of interest to those who did, and who did not, ride the fast boats. Its speed was reputedly fifty miles an hour. It was propelled by twin airplane motors and had no rudder. Speed of the engines controlled its course and it could not be run backward. The original motors had been traded with Gar Wood for two Fiatt Italian motors before the accident. The boat's end was several months later, in a fire on a junk heap near Milford.

Diver Working

Capt. Thompson and his son, on the deck of the famous passenger launch "Iona".

Recover Boat

After the "Miss Thriller" was brought ashore at Terrace park. Shows the back end was completely sheared off.

"Camp Foster on . . . ."
State Y. M. C. A. Built Camp Foster on East Okoboji in 1913

Camp Foster on East Okoboji lake is one of the oldest boys' camps in Iowa. It was established in 1913 by the Iowa Young Men's Christian Association, after a camp had been operated on the Iowa river near Iowa Falls, the previous summer.

The camp here was the dream of Leonard Paulson, state boys' work secretary in 1911, and came about through his efforts. He visioned it as a model state camp.

It has operated annually since its founding and has given happy vacations to thousands of boys from Iowa and the midwest. In the reorganization of the Y.MC.A. some years ago, the camp was taken over by the North Central District which is made up of several midwestern states. The district organization now rents the camp to the local Y.M.C.A. for $1 per year. The local organization comprises the counties in the southern tier of Minnesota, southwest, and Iowa counties west and south as far as Carroll, Iowa.

The camp is directed by the local Y.M.C.A. secretary who resides in Spencer. Officers for both the local group and the camp are chosen from business men and leaders in the counties comprising the group area.

In March, 1914, the late Thomas D. Foster of Ottumwa, head of the Morrell Packing company, purchased the tract of land that became Camp Foster, for $5,000. It had been part of one of the original homesteads taken by a family that was murdered by the Indians.

Mr. Foster gave $1,000 of the $5,000 as a gift for the purchase of the camp by the Y.M.C.A., and other gifts were made to complete the amount. Other gifts included $1,000 from Charles and Clyde Brenton of Dallas Center, $500 from J. H. Allen of Pocahontas, $500 from H. C. Wallace of Des Moines, and others ranging from $100 to $500.

Improvements began in 1915 under the direction of Harry Goodrich, state boys' work secretary. Tent floors were built, a guest cottage, and a tennis court. That year 447 boys attended five camp periods.

In 1916, W. H. Whiting of Whiting, Iowa, built a lodge 28x60 feet in size, with a porch on three sides, for a social center on the lakeshore. The auditorium seats 200 and there are two small offices and the camp store in the building. Its cost was $1,650. The stone fireplace was donated by W. H. Brenton of Des Moines.

Additional improvements amounting to $6,000 were made in 1923 and the program enlarged. The big Leonard Paulson dining hall was built in 1929 and dedicated Aug. 25. It cost $5,552.61 and was paid for with pledges made by men interested in the welfare of Iowa boys. Mr. Brenton, then state chairman, presided at the dedicatory program and the Rev. A. E. Rust of Webb spoke on the subject "My friend Leonard Paulson." George M. Foster of Ottumwa, then vice chairman of the state committee, presented the lodge to the state organization. It was accepted by D. M. Sterns of Okoboji, then chairman of the Camp Foster committee. Harry W. White of Chicago made the dedicatory address.

The camp now accommodates about 120 boys and is well furnished for their enjoyment and instruction. There are small wooden cabins to accommodate nine boys and a leader each, a director's cabin, first aid cabin, nature study cabin, staff cottages, and the dining and recreation lodges. The grounds also include several athletic fields for various sports, swimming docks and rowboats, and complete water and sewer system and refrigeration units for the dining hall and kitchen.

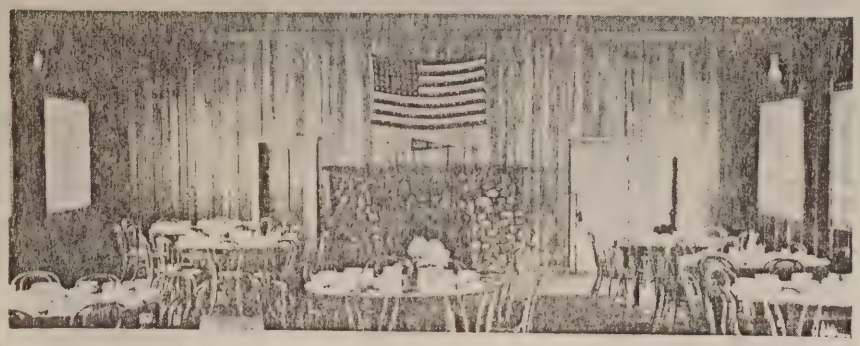
Although accurate figures are not obtainable, it is estimated that over 12,000 young people have enjoyed a period at Camp Foster since its founding. In recent years it has been opened to a wider field than boys' camps and there is an annual 4-H club girls' outing and another for 4-H club boys. There are also church groups that use the camp for conferences, and once a year the camp is available for ingathering of high school athletes.

The camp is conducted as a Christian institution and great care is taken to provide the best in leadership for the growth and development of the boys' spiritual natures, in view of the opportunities offered by the surroundings. The training is non-sectarian and is based on the camp motto "Each for all and all for each." The religious services are held in a beautiful out-door chapel built for the purpose in its natural setting.

Camp leaders include men specially trained for boys' leadership and volunteers from among the leading business and professional men in the local Y.M.C.A. area. For several years before the war the staff included an Indian and an Hawaiian youth as well as the student physician and lifesaving crew.

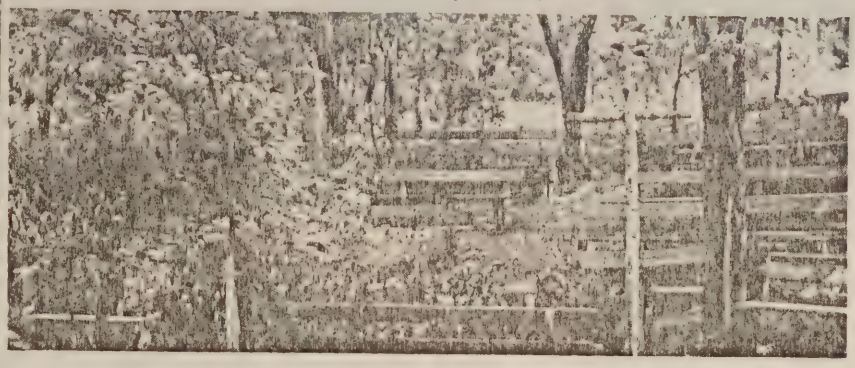
(Note: By a consolidation late in 1944, Camp Foster became a part of the North Central Area Y.M.C.A., its immediate district is northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota, with permanent offices at Spencer. The area comprises several states and the area council operates several camps. In the summer of 1944, the camp accommodated 809 campers, said to be the largest in the camp history. Ray E. Norman, an experienced camp director, took over the supervision of Camp Foster with the 1944 season. The area council continues to add equipment and special features for the camp and camping periods.)

Dining Hall



Williamz picture, dining room interior.

Outdoor Chapel



Williamz picture, outside chapel.

Dining Hall

Dining hall, Williamz picture.

"Another monarch has fallen . . . ."

A Monarch Hath Fallen

Another monarch has fallen; a king of the woodland has been deposed after a reign of centuries. The monarch was nameless except that it was of the dynasty of Burr Oak. It was one of the huge trees that had lived for hundreds of years, probably, along a narrow strip of land on Hayward's bay and directly east from there.

Years ago, when the road between Okoboji and Spirit Lake was the width of a wagon box and there was a narrow grade between two ponds just north of the present airport, there was a huge elm tree that guarded the road. It was a landmark from the beginning of white men's wanderings here.

Then the road had to be widened and improved and the monarch fell. Just how big it was is probably lost to those who measure by the rule. But it was big, in fact, it was huge, and a beautifully gnarled old tree that had gained a foothold on a bit of alluvial soil back in the lost centuries.

After it was gone, there was a successor, after a fashion. It was an oak tree, knotted and gnarled, which stood in a pasture over the fence from the road. Hundreds of passing folk have seen and admired the great oak growing there; branches towering above its neighbors, majestic and proud, aged and mellow.

Last week, workmen for the telephone company felled the mighty oak and it was revealed there to the many who found beauty in its ragged profile; revealed in its stark nakedness of trunk and limb. Time had wrought its own death-knell to the monarch of the woodland and had eaten its heart away.

The monarch is no more. The next in line may be found among those mighty oaks that grew tall and sturdy and knotted and gnarled with the waters of West Okoboji lake lapping upon the sands nearby. For the greatest of those centenarian oaks remaining in the lake region are nearer the lake—and off the beaten highway. (Dec. 15, 1941)

Mighty Monarch

The road to Arnolds Park from Spirit Lake, showing the huge elm tree that once stood where two ponds flanked the road, halfway between the Hayward's bay road corner and the airport. Ponds are now a pasture, and field. Picture possibly 1910. The hole where the roots were, may still be seen.

"Strangely enough . . . ."

Spirit Lake Town, Never on Lake, Might Have Been Okoboji

Strangely enough, the location of the town of Spirit Lake was influenced by the bragging of an early-day settler and was never laid out in the place first chosen for it.

Too, of Spirit Lake's three townsites, none was on the lake from which the town's name was taken.

But for the pioneer braggart, Spirit Lake would have been located at the narrows between East and West Okoboji lakes, five miles south of the lake, and on the site that is now the town of Okoboji.

Delving into historical records, some little-known and interesting facts are found. The first townsite called Spirit Lake was claimed in July, 1856, and was located at the present site of Okoboji. Although the same site was favored by the second townsite promotors, there were kept away by the braggart.

Because the Granger homestead was held by William Granger, survivor of the Red Wing, Minn., party of young men who first claimed the Okoboji grove, a second townsite was surveyed and a half section of land platted about a half mile south of Spirit lake and along the northern part of East Okoboji lake, in June, 1857. Granger abandoned his claims to the other townsite in 1859.

The third townsite was located south of the second, on the southern half of the section previously claimed, shortly after 1856, and is the present town.

By common consent, apparently, the name of the lake lying at the north was adopted for all three of the early-day towns.

July 15, 1856, young Dr. Isaac H. Harriott with his companions Carl and William Granger and Bertell Snyder of Red Wing, and James Mattock of Delaware county, Iowa, arrived at the northern border of Spirit lake. They were interested in a land project and had come to choose a townsite. Mattock had come to locate a homestead.

After looking around for several

days, the young men decided upon a beautiful wooded location where two of the lakes met. They declared it the site they were looking for, named it Spirit Lake, and set about making it into their dream town.

Young Herriott wrote his parents that the site was five miles south of the lake but gave no reason for selecting or naming the town unless it was that they had fond hopes that the town might one day grow to reach the south shore of Spirit lake. They had invested some $2,000 in the project at the time all but William Granger were killed in the massacre, history states.

At about the same time the young men from Red Wing were planning their new town, a party of men from Erie county, New York, by way of Newton, Iowa, conceived the idea of enriching themselves by following the ideas of townsite promotors who had thus become rich.

The three were O. C. Howe, B. F. Parmenter, and R. U. Wheelock. Later in the project they were joined by Henry Barkman and George E. Spencer, also of Newton, and the Rev. J. S. Prescott of Wisconsin. The latter three, however, were not active. Spencer withdrew and founded the town of Spencer in Clay county.

Howe, Wheelock, and Parmenter made the first trip to the lakes in the fall of 1856. They were well pleased and returned in March, 1857, in time to discover the massacre and spread the alarm. They returned again in May, 1857, and located their townsite that June. The location they desired was the same one chosen by the Red Wing youths. They were prevented from locating there by William Granger who made great threats and promises of what he meant to do to develop the site.

Court House

Dickinson county courthouse. The first courthouse was used as a stockade and settlers lived there during the summer of 1862, when the Indians were on the rampage in Minnesota.

Airplane View

Williamz airview of Spirit Lake, looking north. East Okoboji at right, Spirit lake at extreme top.

Spirit Lake Bridge

The swingbridge at Spirit lake. Steamboats docked here enroute to Orleans. Shoppers frequently went to town by boat. (Williamz)

So the men chose a site on the northern end of East Okoboji lake. As the government surveys were not completed nor the plats filed in the local land office until January, 1860, the men had a section surveyed and named it Spirit Lake City.

The financial crisis and rumors of war had dampened the ardor of the promotors when the government survey was completed. None of them cared to advance the $1.25 per acre necessary to secure title to the townsite. Meanwhile settlers lived there, built, bought and sold buildings, and the mention of a town lot was a common joke.

Not until 1864 was anything more done about the townsite although a small collection of buildings was known as Spirit Lake and had been named as the county seat in 1858. People abandoned homes after the Indian uprising of 1862-63 and the townsite lay practically vacant for some years.

Henry Barkman finally proposed to prove up on the townsite under the premption law. He arranged with settlers to give title to those owning buildings and living on the property and to carry out the original plans as to streets and public lands. He proved up on 175.35 acres on June 10, 1865.

The land Barkman claimed was the south half of the original section, described as follows: the east one-half of the southwest one-fourth, the northeast one-fourth of the southwest one-fourth, and the southwest one-fourth of the northeast one-fourth of section 3, township 99, range 26.

The remainder of the section was claimed by C. Blackert as a homestead and by Joseph Currier who proved up Feb. 1, 1867.

Strictly speaking, Barkman had no right to prove up on the townsite as he had not lived on the property and did not meet all other requirements. But when the patent was issued April 2, 1866, he gave the promised titles and included the property that the courthouse and schoolhouse occupied.

The first survey of the new townsite was made in 1870 and then parcels of land varying from one to ten acres were sold, the fact accounts for the many "additions" in the town of Spirit Lake.

As there had been no buildings erected in the town since 1860, the first improvement in the new townsite was the moving of the old Lake View House from the north end of town to a site now occupied by the Antlers hotel. This was done in 1866.

It was this, then, the third town of Spirit Lake, that grew into the lake region's city of today with a permanent population of over 1,700 and a summer trading center for thousands.

New Bridge

Concrete bridge and paved highways 71 and 9.

Spirit Lake Landing

The Spirit Lake swingbridge, by Williamz, in years preceding building of concrete bridge and paved highway.

"The first place . . . ."

The Nicollet Survey Touched These Lakes at Crandall's Lodge

The first place in the lake region about which history was written, was that beach on the extreme northwest of Spirit lake, near the present site of Crandall's lodge.

It was near that point that young Nicollet, surveying this territory for the war department in 1838, made his observations. In his report the entire chain of lakes was designated as Spirit lake. Maps made following his survey were the only official bits of information obtainable regarding the region at the time it was opened for settlement.

When the nearest railroad terminals were at Algona, Storm Lake, and Sibley, travel to the lakes was really a strenuous affair. Only the strong enjoyed the hunting and fishing these lakes offered. Pioneer farm houses served for

shelter for such sportsmen or they lived in tents.

One of the first hotels in the lake region was "Hunter's Lodge," built in 1871 on the northwest shore of Spirit lake near the point where young Nicollet camped thirty-three years before. The lodge became known quickly and was a favorite stopping place. Hundreds of sportsmen were entertained there in the days before railroads and wagon roads were built into this new country.

In 1879, Orlando Crandall, who had come from New York state in 1866, bought the lodge and renamed it "Crandall's Lodge." He built additions and the place continued in popularity until by 1900 some eighty persons could be accommodated there.

The beach is one of the finest on Spirit lake, with a gradually-sloping bottom. Boating, sailing, fishing, hunting were all among the sports of those days, and limit catches of fish were the rule .

The lodge at the north end of the lake continues to bear the Crandall name, although Orlando Crandall has been dead many years. The lodge continues to draw those who want to be off the beaten path, where it is quiet and there is a constant cooling breeze from the lake. It has been operated for some years by Miss Marie Nefzger, granddaughter of Mr. Crandall, and daughter of the former Hattie Crandall.

The property is still in the estate and includes about 100 acres in Iowa. The property borders on the state line. During the years a colony of summer cottages has come into being on that strip of shore and a graveled highway leads to Crandall's. According to the plan operating there, cottages are built on leased land by persons desiring summer homes there, but the land title remains in the Crandall estate.

Another of the famous old hotels was the West Side on the west shore of the isthmus between Spirit lake and East Okoboji. In 1872, an English bachelor, William Lillywhite, bought property there and built a lodge similar to Hunter's lodge. The Englishman preferred to travel footfree and sold his popular property to C. A. Arnold in 1875. That owner erected additional buildings and named it the "West Side hotel." The original Lillywhite buildings were destroyed by fire, however, and the hotel that was torn down on the site in the middle-thirties, was the one built by Arnold. It had many owners after he disposed of it.

Crandall's Lodge

Crandall's lodge

Sunrise On Spirit Lake

Inlet into Spirit lake, north shore, believed to be point at which earliest recorded observations were taken. Now west boundary of Mini-Wakan state park. Williamz.

Once Popular Hotel

West Side Hotel, south shore of Spirit lake. Once the Lilywhite Lodge. Has since been torn down. Williamz.

"In August, 1890 . . . ."

Founding Templar Park Milestone In Iowa Grand Commandry History

In August, 1890, the Grand Commandry of Iowa, Knights Templar, held a conclave in a tent on Kingman's point within the sound of the troubled waters of Spirit lake.

Every June, Sir Knights from all over Iowa and the mid-west gather at the same place, now Templar park in annual conclave.

The decades have passed swiftly, leaving happy memories of masquerade parties, fish fries, the launch "Templar" christened by Harriette Pettibone, of cool breezes, of friendships made; memories dominated always by the pattern of plumed knights.

The late Theodore Sutton Parvin of Cedar Rapids was the father of Iowa Knights Templar. Through his efforts a charter was applied for and granted to DeMolay Commandry No. 1, at Muscatine, Sept. 10, 1856. It was signed by the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the United States.

Palestine Commandry of Iowa City received the second charter, Sept. 15, 1856. Siloam Commandry, Dubuque, received its charter Feb. 16, 1864. Temple Commandry No. 4, Des Moines, was chartered June 10, 1864, after having worked under a dispensation for several years.

The Grand Commandry of Iowa was organized at Des Moines June 4, 1864, by delegates from the three chartered bodies. Theodore S. Parvin became the first Grand Commander and held office two years. The first Grand Recorder was William B. Langridge who served nineteen years.

Sir Knight J. A. Shipman first made the suggestion that the Knights Templar, whose annual sessions were being held jointly with the Grand Chapter, purchase a camping ground. This suggestion was made in 1883. Committees investigated and in 1884 reported two tracts of land available, the Kingman tract on Spirit lake part of the Kingman Place, and one on Fort Dodge point, West Okoboji lake.

Later, C. W. Easton stated his authority to deed the Kingman point property to the Grand Commandry, an offer guaranteed by E. S. Ellsworth of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern Railway running from Cedar Rapids through the lake region. In 1885, the deed for twenty-one acres was presented, a gift from the people of Spirit Lake, the railroad, and others.

In 1886 an appeal was made for funds to carry out proposed plans for Templar park. At the conclave in Oskaloosa in 1887, the Appollo Commandry of Cedar Rapids presented $200. It was one of the first gifts made by the commandry which has continued to promote Templar park through the years.

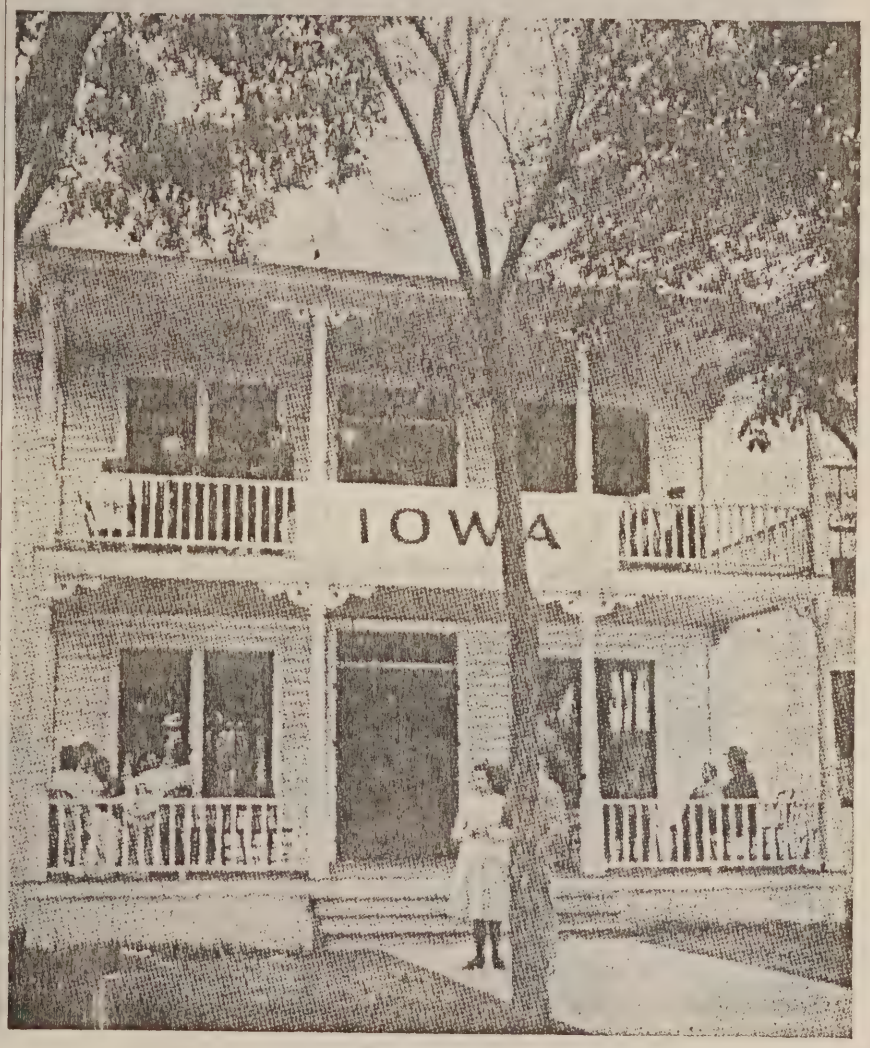
The gift of land permitted the Grand Commandry to hold its 1890 conclave at the new site. A tent was used for the asylum. Sir Knights and their ladies were housed in the large and magnificent Orleans hotel, a project of the railway.

Rains dampened that holiday, but those who attended were pleased with the plan. Only three sessions have been held elsewhere since 1890. In 1892, the sessions were in Dubuque. In 1917 and 1918 sessions were in Cedar Rapids and Marshalltown, following the destruction of Templar park buildings by fire and erection of new ones.

The first buildings at Templar park were built in 1891 at a cost of $2,500. Offices and dining room were on the first floor and the asylum was on the second floor. The building was destroyed by a twister, Aug. 19, 1898.

Development of the Templar summer home progressed steadily from then on. An apartment building with forty-eight rooms was erected at a cost of $2,500. Next a small rotunda and store room were added, then another forty-eight-room wing. The rotunda was enlarged and porches added. A new asylum and dining hall followed next and then Past

First Asylum



The first asylum building at Templar park.

Grand Commander George Bever of Cedar Rapids presented a headquarters building. A pavilion was erected on the lakeshore and a toboggan slide was built nearby.

Fire swept through the main building June 14, 1917, leaving blackened ashes just before Festal Week. At the sessions, called at Cedar Rapids, plans were made for a new building.

On the fiftieth anniversary program of the Iowa Grand Commandry at Templar park in 1940, the Knight Templar property was the showplace of the lake region.

The apartment house building is of fireproof construction, gray pebble-dash finish with red tile roof. The central portion bears a huge cross that is lighted during Festal Week and is visible for miles. The building has 143 rooms, a large rotunda, writing rooms, dining room, and everything to make it pleasant for those who visit there. The grounds are beautifully landscaped and blooming flowers are in evidence from early spring until late in the fall.

The new building, with its furnishings, cost $135,000 and was first used in 1919. The parade grounds and golf course have been built from a drained slough and seeded at a cost of over $11,000. The grounds now include forty acres lying between the lake shore and the graveled road. A new pavilion was erected in 1919 at a cost of $25,000, to match the apartment building in architectural design. The care-taker's residence and garages complete the Templar park group.

A number of summer cottages, similar in design and size are owned and occupied by Sir Knights and their families during the summer season. They are used mainly for rest and most of the owners take their meals in the dining room.

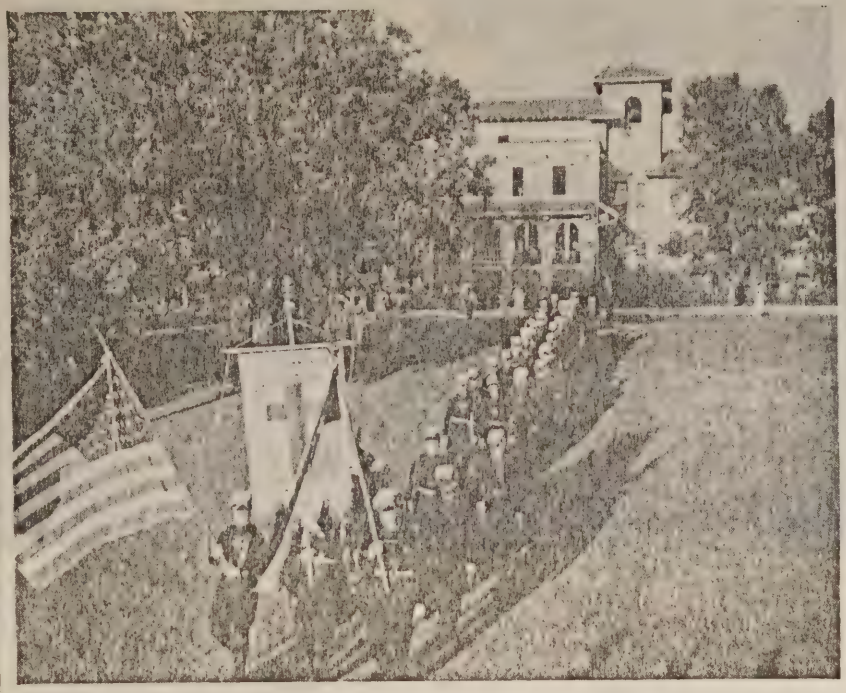
Annual conclave week brings some 500 persons to Templar park, Sir Knights and members of their families. Sunday is always "Arrival day" and a religious service is conducted in the evening by the Eminent Grand Prelate. There is a school of instruction held every Monday of conclave, with the formal sessions beginning at 9 a.m. Tuesday and carrying through election of officers Thursday morning. Installation of new officers is always held Friday morning.

A feature of the conclave that is of general public interest is the parades of the commandries, held every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening at sunset. At that time the Sir Knights wear their plumes and uniforms and parade on the grounds west of the apartment building. The parade is always preceded by a concert given by the Spirit Lake High school band on the front lawn. The orders of the day and lowering of the American flag comprise

Templar Park Residence

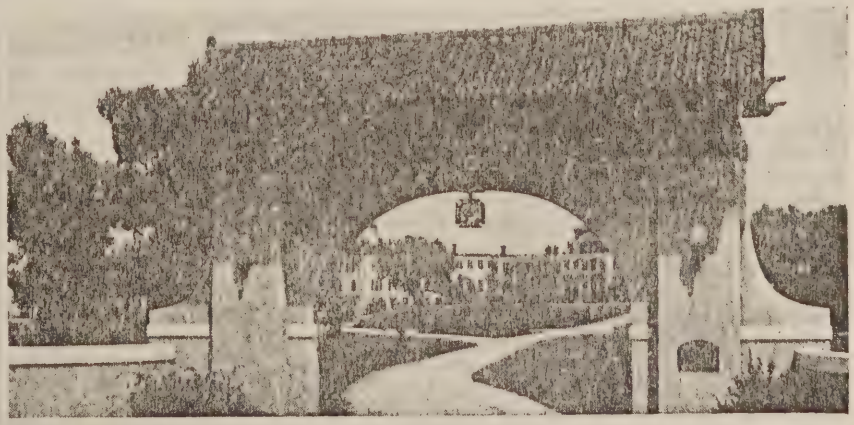
The Templar park building from the lake.

Grand Commandery



The grand officers of the Grand Commandery of Iowa, Knights Templar, lead the commanderies onto the parade ground.

Entrance To Templar Park



Gateway to Templar park, showing building beyond.

the ceremonies during the parade. Cars line the highway and grounds for some distance every night.

Various other meetings are held in conjunction with the annual conclave, such as the Past Grand Commander's dinner and the annual session of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross of Constantine. There is a program for the women at Templar park, with the wife of the grand commander as hostess for the week.

At the beginning of World War II, the Grand Commandry offered Templar park to the government for hospital or recreation use but the offer was not accepted. The Commandry voted to meet elsewhere during the years of the war and Templar park was closed except for the annual week-long convention-seminar for young people of western Iowa Congregation-Christian churches, and an occasional group meeting for a day. It was announced early in 1946 that the regular program for Templar park would be resumed with the conclave late in June.

Sunset Review Is Over

The end of the evening parade.

"High on the west bank . . . ."
Kingman Place Historic Site — Raided By Indians in 1862 Uprising

High on the west bank of Spirit lake stands a big, old, white, green-shuttered house, surrounded and guarded by native oaks, maple, and basswoods. Beside the front door stands a huge old lilac bush which has shed its fragrance for over fifty years.

This site is called Kingman Place. It is the oldest and one of the best-known spots on Iowa's biggest lake.

Kingman Place is a bit of New England dropped on the wide expanse of middle west prairies. Here, in the year 1858, came a tall stalwart young man, Alvarado Kingman. He brought with him his young wife, who knew nothing of the hardships of pioneer life, but who had unlimited faith in her clear-eyed, ambitious young soldier husband. They came from Brockton, Mass., bringing with them some of the things of New England to a log house that was their home.

Soon after the Civil war, Alvarado Kingman built the home which is still standing and is still the home of the Kingmans. Lumber for the big house was hauled overland by oxen from Mankato, Minn. The Civil war soldier built for his wife and family one of the finest homes in the whole territory, with its seventeen rooms and comforts of New England.

At the time the home was built, there were also many acres of land with it. The land extended north, including what is now Templar park, and west including the present-day Pangborn, Walter White, and McCarthy farms. At the south it extended as far as does Big Spirit lake.

In 1890, following the death of his wife, Mr. Kingman sold the property to B. F. Stevens, a St. Louis millionaire. Stevens planned to build a model dairy farm but after a lapse of some years, Kingman Place again came into the possession of the Kingmans.

It was Stevens who built the tower, one of the landmarks of Spirit lake. In the bottom of the tower he built a cooling room, packing room, and butter room, that were to have been used for the dairy. Upstairs was the kitchen and bedroom for the buttermaker, and the observation tower.

In 1913, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Bergman of Spirit Lake purchased the Kingman property and the land surrounding it and once more the Kingmans took up residence there, for Mrs. Bergman is a daughter of Alvarado Kingman, and had spent her childhood there.

Four generations have lived within the walls of this home. Brides have come down the long stairs, reflected in the tall pier glass; little boys have coasted down the shining walnut banister; fishing rods of yesteryear and golf sticks have rested against the spinning wheel; the skates of several generations, and today's tennis rackets, have leaned on the grandfather clock.

Many treasures, perhaps not of great intrinsic value but rich in memories, are in the big high-ceilinged rooms. There are rosewood chairs and tables and a square Chickering piano. There are walnut beds, walnut wardrobes and sideboard, woven coverlids, braided rugs, and a Wedgwood dinner set used by five generations of Kingmans.

There is a chest of solid mahogany, on which three locks were destroyed by Indians during the week in 1862 when the settlers lived in the stockade in Spirit Lake and the Indians were on the rampage north of here.

In the spring, the waters in the ravines on both sides of the house, go singing down to the lake as they did years ago when, through the twilight, a young mother watched those ravines, terrified that red of the sumac bushes might be the red of an Indian blanket, a young mother tense with suspicion of every crackling twig and rustling leaf.

But those years have gone and Kingman Place lives on—dear to the memory of the scores of persons who have been sheltered under its friendly trees and hospitable roof.

Kingman Place today is better known for its hospitality and the cottages tucked among the trees away from the noise and confusion of the highway, close to the lake where waves sing the guests to sleep or the wind plays a harp in the tree tops.

Just to go past, one senses that here is a place where the tenor of life is quiet and happy, just the sort of spot for summer's leisurely pace. Many are the folk who come again and again from the traffic and the noise to spend a vacation close to the wind and waves, and to carry home the kindly smiles of the host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Bergman.

(Note: This story was written and printed by a number of papers in 1936 as a feature story by Peter B. Narey, a great-grandson of Kingman's, grandson of the Bergman's.)

"But a yesterday ago . . . ."

Indian Summer on Spirit Lake

But a yesterday ago, summer was abroad in the land and there was laughter and life and love, and the dancing feet of youth raced past after the fruits of the spring just gone, seeking all the days could hold.

Today the Master Alchemist is tinting the hills with gold and red and brown, and Autumn is making smokey magic across the tawny fields. For the year is treading on the heels of other years, and another summer is gone.

But do not weep, abide awhile and thrill to the whirling halo of the leaves as they pirouette and die on every vagrant breeze, bonny dervishes sending secret love-calls to the coming spring.

No lute may catch the sighing of the wander-weary wind, nor match the silver laughter of water over stones. No brush may capture the witchery of mirrored turquoise from the sky, nor limn the stubble where the blackbird squadrons lie. No film there be delicate enough to imprison the sorcery of an autumn moon high overhead, stunting the tallest trees into scraggly bushes against the lawn—nor singer chant the love-song of the water on the sands so lately wooed by summer suns.

For this is the season of the spirits, of Red Men restless through the earth, the summer of the Indians who once walked this way on moccasined feet—now returned to roam anew the hills and valleys, lakes and lands.

Dame Nature bids us slacken pace and listen, while we may, to the love calls and the war songs from afar, wafted to us on the smokey sunbeams. Like the golden mists before the sunrise, they are astray in the land these lazy days, wandering about where they, too, raced down the years after laughter and life and love; where they, too, were tall feather-bedecked cavaliers riding briskly to the strife, and returning proudly from the hunt.

Look yonder—the smoky haze on the hilltop is covering the valley from view . . . there are the half-forgotten things, the things of the long ago, the magic out of which the myths are made.

The tattered bits of cloud that go drifting down the sky are canoes which the Red Men ride today to a new rendezvous where White Men do not walk, a Happy Hunting Ground where there is no war, a land of eternal plenty.

This was once the Indian paradise, this magic place of sturdy oaks and sparkling waters. Since the dawn of the world, this had been their sacred place where game was plentiful and warriors always found food for hungry women. And yet—there was something sinister that kept them always fearful of the deep blue waters of the "big lake", the restless waves of the lake where demons dwelt. Sinister, but compelling, else why do they walk here again cloaked by the silver mists of the Indian summer, visible only to eyes that wish to see?

At noon, when shadows melt before the sun, one may listen well to the tales that made our Iowa great. For every child must know this great brave, and that. Each knows the tale of the one that to his home meant most.

Meanest of them all, most vile, was he they called "Old Ink", the champion bad man of the Sioux. 'Twas Inkpaduta who discovered the lake of spirits and of the big water to the white men from afar.

Hatred, deep and steadfast enough to surmount all else, ruled Inkpaduta. Red of hair, an Indian oft called "A lawless son of a lawless sire"—cruel, bloodthirsty, with savage temper—he marched relentlessly down his years against the world.

He it was whose footsteps always left a crimson track, whose path led through our lakeland to leave the scarlet snows to melt beneath a pitying sun. Thus it was the world first knew about the lake of spirits . . perhaps its troubled demons mourn today more for his black deeds than for all else that caused them worry in the long, long ago.

And yet—perhaps 'tis white man's pity we should seek today. Mayhap the white men called upon themselves the wrath of savage sire . . this was their land, their sacred land. Was his cause just . . . to fight the only way he knew for the paradise he knew? Did white men goad this outlaw chief to greater deeds of hatred? History calls him only the blackest of them all, yet shows a mark of genius. For it was he who planned the battles as the nation's finest warrior, a military man without a peer among his people. What if Old Ink had lived in other times to lead other armies into victories? Would his name, then, have lived beside the great?

Take heed, these autumn days, lest he be among the cloud-cloaked men who hold rendezvous among the teepees left behind in fields of harvest corn. Take heed, these sunny days, lest your step be startled by moccasined feet stirring the leaves behind you. Take heed—Inkpaduta and his murdering sons are abroad today.

Twilight of each autumn day brings council fire, smoke wraiths in the distance are the pipes of peace they smoke today with us who robbed them of their all—twilight of the year goes slipping past as warriors sleep once more beneath the stars when day is done, and signal fires say "All is well" beyond the hill.

The drowsy twitter of a bird marks not an interrupted woodland dream—'tis only the soft call of lovers at the trysting place where oak trees shelter and the light is soft.

Look closely—for the legend says that Pale Face Dove is standing there and to her side comes Star of Day. He is the chieftan's son, she the captive maid whose fate was sealed around the evening fire.

Still as the night, these two await the sinking moon, so they can be away. Star of Day is speaking now, he tells his love that in the lake the demons dwell, that only the brave would dare defy both tribe and they. But Pale Face Dove is eager to be gone. She hears that long ago the demons on the isle were angered at the warriors landing there and took them 'neath the waves to die. But Pale Face Dove is brave. She hears that through the years no man has dared the waves again. But she is ready.

A phantom glides onto the lake . . . an echo on the shore arouses sleeping ones to fury. The demons, too, whose island home is now a crystal cave beneath the waves, awake. The silver cloak grows darker . . . .

There is only a mist on the troubled waters, only the restless splashing of ripples against the sands, only the whispered rustle of autumn leaves in answer to the wind's caress . . . but the lovers ride forth again tonight to escape their fate, young as youth, they go across the lake of spirits to another tryst when the council fires burn on the autumn hilltops, toward another dawn and another destiny.

"Magnificence was the keynote . . . ."

Magnificent Hotel Built on Spirit Lake 1883, Resort Project

Magnificence was the keynote of the first resort venture that actually got started on these lakes before it folded up completely as it stood on paper.

That first project was the huge Orleans hotel on the isthmus between Spirit lake and East Okoboji. It was a project of officials of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern railway which had been built into Spirit Lake. The first train was run into the town July 11, 1882. The hotel may have been built to induce passengers to ride on their train, and give them a place to ride to.

The lake region has never since seen anything with the magnificence and pomp of the first Orleans hotel. Those who remember it, say it was truly something to write home about, a metropolitan Ritz, ultramodern, dropped down onto the wild lakeshore of northern Iowa. Its grandeur, and incidents connected with the old hotel, are still topics for discussion when oldtimers get together for a "remember-when" session.

The hotel was built and opened to the public with a big dedicatory ceremony held June 16, 1883. The opening was a great affair and brought together one of the most important crowds of bigwigs ever to be congregated at the lakes for one event.

Presumably, the hotel was named "Orleans" in honor of the city of New Orleans, from which city some of the officials (and money) came for the resort. A large company of folk from Atlanta, Ga., among them Col. E. P. Howell of the "Atlanta Constitution" came for the dedication.

Governor Boynton and a group of legislators were present and the late S. L. Dows of Cedar Rapids was presiding officer at the ceremonies which were carried out with distinction far outranking the area in which they were held.

Capt. C. B. Richards of Fort Dodge, captain of Company A, in the command of soldiers of the relief expedition to the lakes after the massacre, was one of the speakers. Said Captain Richards: "To me it seems like a dream—as though some Aladdin had again found his lamp. Where I had known the trackless prairie and almost impassable sloughs and rivers, I now find one of the best built railroads on the continent and a hotel which for comfort, convenience, and beauty of location, has but few equals and no superior east or west, north or south.

"It seems but a short time since I left Fort Dodge, then the frontier town of the Northwest, with two hundred men, volunteers raised on two hours' notice, to march one hundred miles across an almost treeless and trackless prairie in the inclement month of March with the ground covered with several feet of snow, to rescue from the merciless Sioux the few pioneers who had pushed on beyond the outskirts of civilization.

"We found here, where are so many happy homes and well cultivated farms, only a few scattered log cabins and the mutilated bodies of every man, woman, and child of this then far off and isolated settlement.

"The country we came over yesterday in a palace car in four hours then required ten days of weary marching without roads or bridges, and instead of a palatial hotel with every modern comfort and convenience the grove on the lake shore was our only shelter, and the slice of bacon cooked by a camp fire our only subsistence."

There was much oratory, toasts, and merriment, and removed so many thousand miles from the centers of smart society, the opening was highly successful from all viewpoints.

The hotel was well worthy of all the oratory and ceremonies and the silk hats and satin gowns.

An account in the Spirit Lake Beacon at the time said of the building: "The dimensions of the main building are three hundred and twenty-four by forty feet, two stories in the east side and a basement on the west end forty-eight feet, making it three stories with an addition sixty by one hundred and twenty feet from the center of the house to the railroad track.

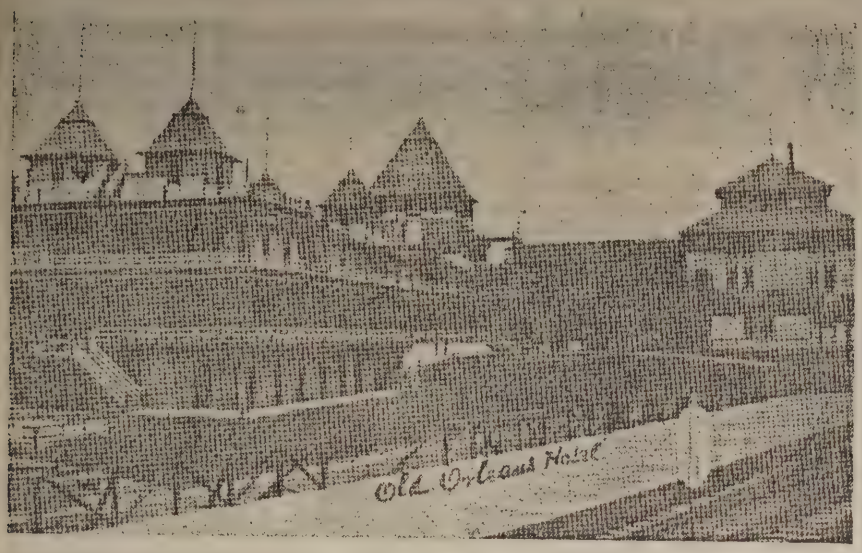
"It contains a spacious dining room fifty by sixty feet. The building is surmounted by nine handsome towers, one on each corner and one over the commodious office. The veranda affords a grand promenade three thousand feet long and sixteen feet wide. There are two hundred guest rooms all furnished in first-class style with annunciators, gas, baths, and all modern conveniences. Every room has two doors, one leading to the corridor and the other direct to the veranda.

"There is a regular postoffice named "Minnie" close to the hotel. The American Express and Western Union Companies have offices in the house, and there is telephone connection with the town of Spirit Lake. Of course, there is a laundry, a billiard hall, bowling alley, fishing tackle, boats, and all minor accommodations in connection with the hotel."

There it is—magnificence and then some! The hotel was built almost parallel to the railroad tracks and toward the lake.

The year the railroad first ran trains into Spirit Lake, the company had put the steamboat "Alpha" on Spirit lake and in 1884 the resort and hotel project officials added the beautiful and like-

Magnificient Hotel



The first Orleans hotel.

wise ultra-modern steamer "Queen" to the list of things supplied for entertainment of guests. Where the "Alpha" carried only 46 passengers, the "Queen" carried 150 or more. The "Alpha" was also the first of the line of boats "sold across the isthmus" and placed in service on the lower lakes. The "Queen" followed, in 1900, and was the last steamer on Spirit lake.

The glory of the old hotel lasted only about fifteen years. Probably its very extravagance was the doom of the Orleans, because its scale was far too high for the times and the place. There was a controversy over the sale of liquor in the hotel. The waters of Spirit lake went from the high peak in the early eighties, to the low peak in the late nineties, and the backers of the hotel project became panicky. They were afraid the lake was going dry.

Another railroad had come from the south and things were picking up at Arnold's place on West Okoboji lake. Then along came a hard storm and the hotel was damaged somewhat. That tipped the scales and the hotel was abandoned and torn down in the summer of 1899. A good many homes in the lake region have some of the lumber, a doorknob, or other souvenirs of the huge hotel, incorporated into them.

Fire has written important pages into the site since the old hotel was torn down. Three times the hotel on the same site has been burned completely or partially down. The present Orleans hotel is the fourth on that site.

From the time the wrecking bars leveled the glory that was once the Orleans hotel, until 1906, that site stood vacant. Then John Burmeister built a smaller and less pretentious hostelry at a cost of about $18,000. It was understood the Hamm Brewing company furnished the money for the venture and the present Antlers hotel in Spirit Lake.

At about 1:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, says the Spirit Lake Beacon of Jan. 31, 1908, fire was observed under the south porch of the New Orleans hotel by Mrs. L. B. Peterson. That would place the fire at about Jan. 29. The flames spread quickly and the place was in ashes within an hour in spite of all Mr. and Mrs. Peterson, caretakers, could do.

Cause of the fire was never established, but the general belief was that sparks from one of the many trains, freight or ice work engine, had fallen into the dry leaves near the porch and smoldered there until they burst into flames in the shelter.

The hotel was close enough to the railroad track that the explanation was widely accepted, especially so because the wind was from the southeast, directly toward the hotel. Everything was burned, except a small saloon building on the east.

That building was 38x128 feet with an ell 33x50 feet. There were 792 running feet of 10-foot veranda in contrast to the 3,000-foot promenade of the first hotel, and only 72 sleeping rooms. Fixtures were all modern. The place was insured for $13,000 and the contents for an additional $5,000. Mr. Burmeister operated it and announced soon after the fire that it would be replaced.

Guy Burnside, who purchased the Antlers hotel in Spirit Lake in 1907, built the third Orleans hotel on the same site. The building was to be opened in time for the first day of the fishing season, May 15, 1909, and Mr. Burnside had 45 room reservations for the opening.

Workmen were rushing the hotel to completion when fire again struck. The explosion of a plumber's fire pot in the new building at noon Monday, probably May 7, 1909, caused complete destruction of the structure. The accident happened at 11:50. Spirit Lake persons thought the noon whistle that day was five minutes early and for a short time did not respond to the call for help. However, the equipment was of little value on the site and the entire building burned.

T. J. Francis of Spirit Lake was the contractor and Eli Green was the man who was working with the blowtorch. He was finishing the plumbing in the bathroom at the extreme west end of the main building at the time of the explosion.

Several carloads of furniture ready to be put in place for the opening, were saved by the large crowd that gathered and only the building proper was consumed.

Mr. Burnside gave orders to rebuild immediately, with the same plans, and the fourth hotel was opened in August, 1909. The investment, by that time,

Present Hotel

Williamz picture of the fourth Orleans hotel, built in 1909. Partially destroyed by fire in 1936.

represented some $60,000 to the hotel owner.

In 1910, Mr. Burnside added the home cottage and a small tearoom building then called the "Onlichans" because it was the only lunch room in that territory. It was operated many years by Carl Burnside, his son. The dance pavilion was built in 1909, at the same time the last hotel was built. The hotel's size was far under that of the first one, with only 56 sleeping rooms, a large lobby, a large dining room, and wide and cool verandas on both sides.

Mr. Burnside died July 1, 1931, and Mrs. Burnside continued to operate the hotel until its sale May 11, 1939, to Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Weatherly of Mason City. She retained the home cottage property in the sale. It remained her home until her death.

Meantime, fire struck once more at the hotel, on July 3, 1936, at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon as Fourth of July guests were arriving. The blaze started near the chimney over the kitchen in the northeast corner of the building. The flames spread quickly and consumed the entire top floor, the third, and much of the second floor. Damage was greatest in the ell at the east, nearest the place where the fire began. All of the lower floor was badly smoked and water soaked.

Only that afternoon, the fires in the kitchen had been started for the first meal in the dining room, the small lunch room having furnished needs until the holiday. Mrs. Burnside was about to leave the hotel for Spirit Lake, when she glanced back and saw smoke coming from the building. Flames were not brought under control by the Spirit Lake fire department until about 4 o'clock.

Furniture was removed from many rooms of the building and transferred to the pavilion building. Loss was about $25,000 and included considerable money spent that spring for improvements on the property.

Of the thirty guests at the hotel, none was injured or lost luggage. Some of the property belonging to the help was destroyed. Mrs. Burnside removed hotel records and the cash boxes from the lobby at once after discovering the fire. Later she found two blackened nickles that had been dropped and were kept as souvenirs. There was some looting of the kitchen supplies by souvenir-hunters on the scene. Hotel guests found places in nearby cottages with aid of the mattresses and linens saved from the fire. Mrs. Burnside carried $6,000 insurance on the building and its contents and had the claim satisfactorily adjusted.

Instead of tearing the building down, Mrs. Burnside had it reduced to two stories in size and made into a small, compact and completely modern hotel unit. Private baths, running water, and furnace and other conveniences were included in the remodelled hotel after the fire. It was then reduced to seventeen rooms, with the east ell eliminated entirely. The dining room was transferred to the pavilion building.

It was a long trail for the hotel from the leg-o-mutton sleeves, bustles, and "gingerbread" verandas to the modern hotel that occupies the site now, with its present-day modern equipment and architecture. It has long been the boast of the hotel that it needs no mechanical air conditioning, it could well have the slogan "Air conditioning by God," because there is a constant breeze, from one lake or another. The hotel is a favorite for fishermen early and late in the season.

Since Mrs. Burnside sold, the pavilion has been remodelled on the inside and converted into a night club, the Royal Orleans.

Unlike the days of the first hotel when everyone came by train and left that way, the train still goes past the back door, and is now the Rock Island motorcar and no longer a lengthy all-service steam train. Hotel guests come on the paved highway between the hotel and railroad tracks. There is no longer any underbrush, but colonies of cottages in all directions. The postoffice is not "Minnie" but Orleans, the town having been founded as Orleans after it grew up around the hotel.

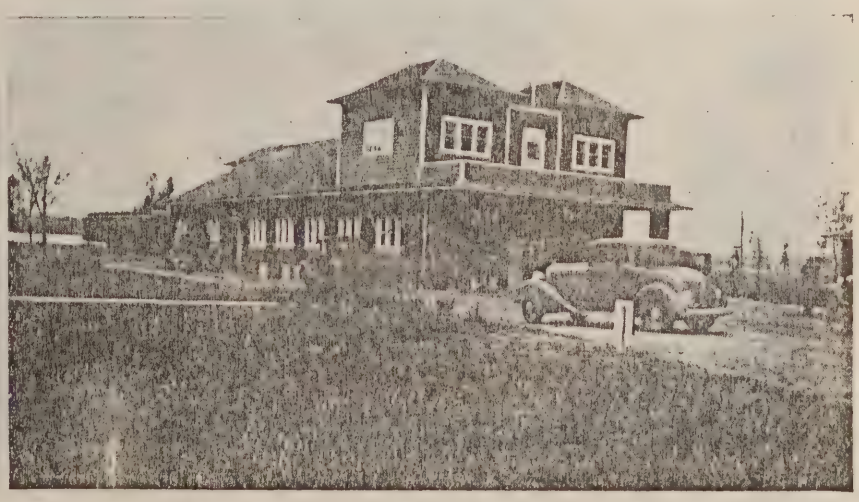
"The state fish hatchery . . . ."

Millions of Pike Hatched at Orleans Augment Natural Iowa Supply

The state fish hatchery is one of the most interesting places in the lake region and one of the busiest for several weeks each spring when the pike spawn is being hatched. The place is in Orleans on the isthmus between Spirit lake and East Okoboji and is headquarters for activities and equipment of the State Conservation Commission workmen in this area.

Gill-netting of pike for spawn usually begins early in April to supply the pike hatchery with eggs for spring operations. The spring of 1946 was the thirty-first season for hatching pike eggs at Orleans. The work was started because it was found that natural hatching of pike eggs was much too slow and the Iowa popular demand for walleyed pike was increasing annually. Figures given by the United States Bureau of Fisheries showed that only about two per cent of pike eggs hatch in their natural habitat. Artificial

Orleans Hatchery



The Orleans hatchery building. "Hawkeye II" may be seen beyond the building.

hatching produced fish from about 65 per cent of the eggs taken.

The reason given for this is that pike do not guard the spawn after it is laid. During spawning there are three to five male pike to every female. When the spawn is deposited on the lake bed and fertilized, the pike go away and leave it without protection.

Wave action washes some of the spawn to shore and otherwise destroys it. Fungus attacks some of the eggs. Some are eaten by bullheads, carp, and suckers. Nesting fish, which go in pairs, such as bass, sunfish, bullheads, and carp, guard their spawn and whip diseased eggs out of the nests with their tails. The per cent of their hatch is much higher than that of pike.

About April 12 the pike begin to spawn in the Okoboji and Spirit lakes. They continue usually until about April 27. The dates vary with the season. It is a peculiar fact, however, that records kept for many years by fish culturalists showed that the most pike eggs taken by gill-netters always came on April 20.

As soon as the pike come in to spawn, the gill-netting crews begin their work. They work every night during the spawning season or until enough eggs are taken to supply the years' requirements. The men work in pairs with two to four nets which they pull every few hours all night. Nets first used were eight feet deep, placed out from shore. The mesh size is 2 and 2½-inch to permit maximum catch of pike and minimum catch of other game fish. Length and depths of nets now vary.

Pike ready to spawn is stripped at once and released where taken. Those not ready are placed in tubs of water and taken to the stripping station at Arnolds Park or to the hatchery, whichever is nearest, and held in tanks until they are stripped. The night's work is usually over by 5 a.m.

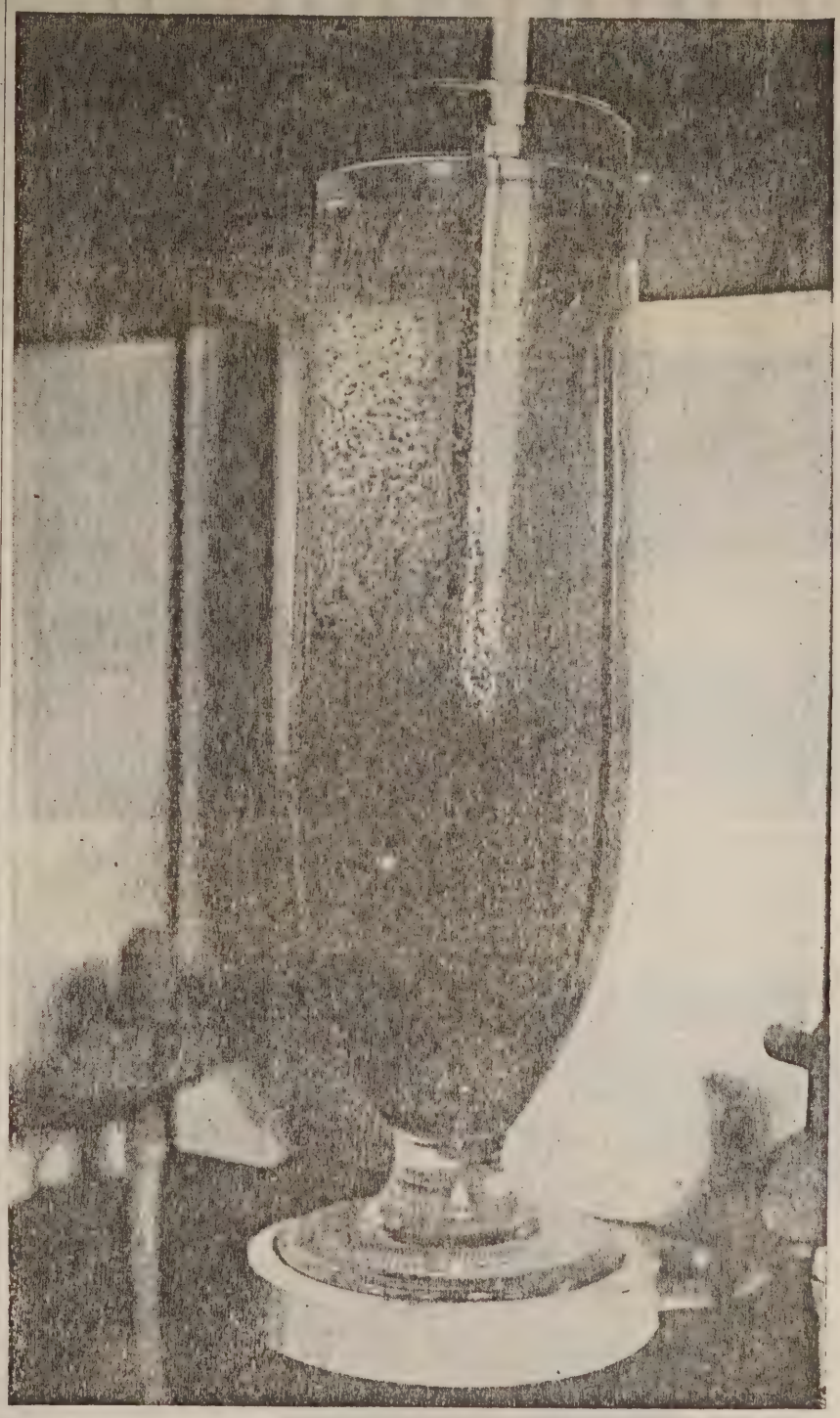
When the eggs are taken from the female pike, they are immediately fertilized in special fibre pans to which they do not adhere. The eggs are then placed in wooden pails or cloth nets and allowed to harden for 18 to 24 hours. This process hardens the eggs into masses resembling miniature honeycomb. The single eggs become hardened and will not crush when pressed between finger and thumb. They are of rubbery consistency.

Eggs that water-harden at Arnolds Park are taken to the Orleans hatchery when they are ready to be separated. Together with those already there, the fish culturist separates the tiny eggs by hand so that no two adhere together. They are then run through bobbinet, one at a time, and put into the hatching jars.

These containers are like huge glass vials, 6 inches in diameter and 28 inches tall. There is a lip at the top and a solid glass base. These set in rows on especially constructed bases along the battery or elongated, shallow water-chute through the hatchery. A metal and rubber tube runs to the bottom of the jar, through which lake water circulates constantly. This continuous flow keeps the eggs in motion, just as natural wave action, and enables the handling of millions of eggs in a very small space.

Twenty days is the average time the

Young Pike Hatching



A jar in which the pike are hatching. Although the tiny fish are transparent, the shells may be seen rising to the top of the jar. This jar is about half hatched.

eggs are kept in the hatching jars. Usually by that time they have hatched although water and air temperature and general weather conditions are of utmost importance and cause this time to vary.

If weather stays cold, the length of time for hatching is longer than in periods of warm weather. The eggs begin to show eyes within six or seven days after they are placed in the jars and an electrical storm any time after that means fast work in the hatchery. All of the fish are apt to hatch at once and there must be real activity on the part of fisheries crews to properly care for the tiny living specks.

When the fish hatch, they go out of the top of the jar into the water chute, and into the holding tanks. There they swim about and begin to grow but cannot be kept over three days. They begin to eat each other when they are kept longer. The hatchery crews take them in cream cans and empty them into the lakes where they are to grow, some directly into the big lakes and rivers and others into nursery ponds where they grow to fingerling length and are then seined out and placed in the big lakes.

In the old days, newly hatched pike were distributed throughout the state in cream cans by train, accompanied by an attendant from the hatchery. Some were taken as far as Council Bluffs. For years now the distribution has been all by truck as it is much faster. The famous old fish car, Hawkeye II, was never used to distribute pike from this hatchery. It was eventually retired from service and used on the hatchery ground.

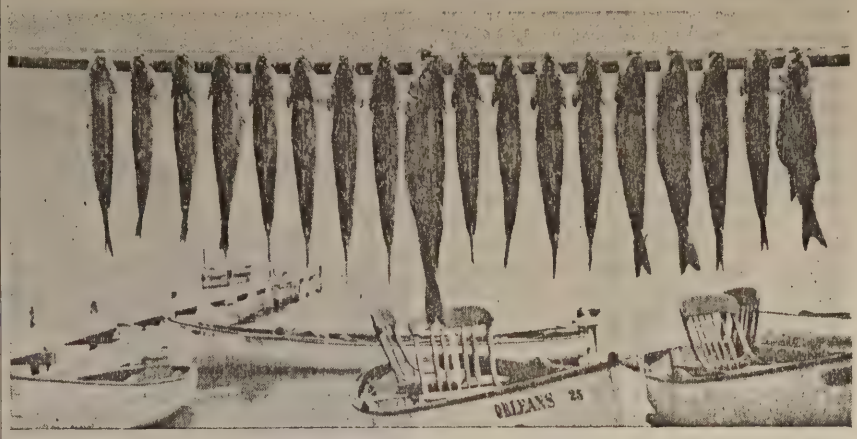
The eggs are tended 24 hours a day and the work is exacting and delicate. The fish culturist must keep the water flowing at the proper rapidity and must watch the jars constantly. He uses a turkey feather to reach into the jars to keep eggs from sticking together, and has a syphon which he uses to suck up the bad eggs to dispose of them. Electrical storms are his constant worry throughout the several weeks he is at work.

A most peculiar thing was learned when hatching first began in this area. Gill-netters found Spirit lake had almost no female pike and the Okoboji lakes had almost no males.

The hatching was started when E. C. Hinshaw of Spirit Lake was fish and game commissioner. Spirit Lake was then the state office and it was famous for its fine collection of mounted wild fowl.

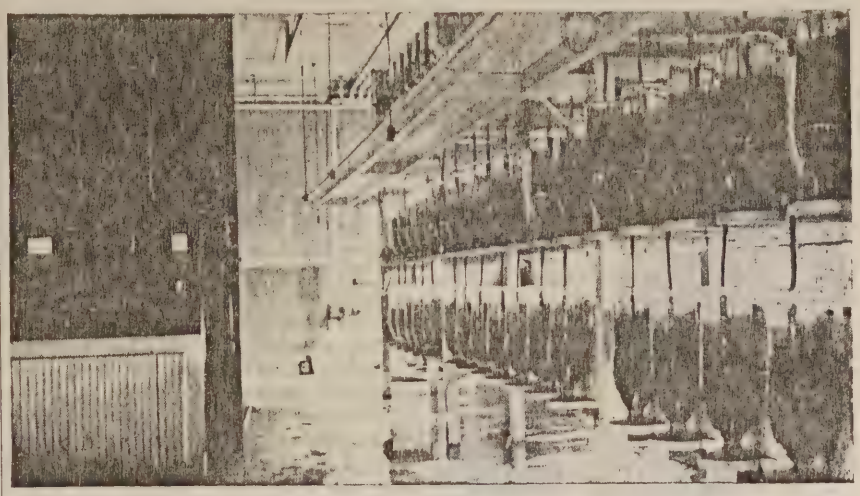
The late S. P. Baur began the hatching work in Iowa. He had been employed by the United States Bureau of Fisheries from the time he was 14 and knew the details of hatchery work by the time he was hired as a game warden and then placed in charge of Iowa hatchery work. He spent all of his time from Feb. 17, 1915, until about

90-Minute Catch



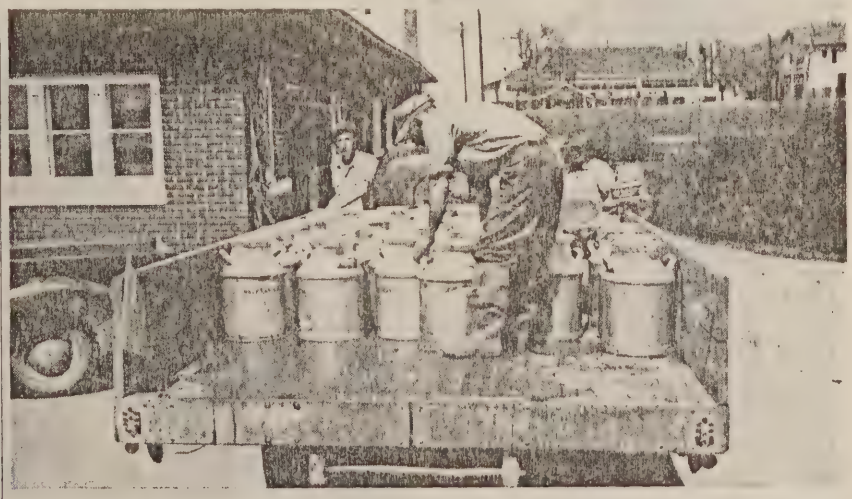
A day's catch on Spirit lake, by F. H. Davis and Frank Lagios. Two silver bass, 16 walleyes, 90 minutes.

A Hatching Battery



One of the hatching batteries in operation. Note they are three tiers high. Duplicate jars are on the other side with the water chute between the rows.

Distribution



Loading cream cans filled with newly hatched pike, to be distributed to nearby West Okoboji lake.

The Hawkeye II

The famous old "fish car", the Hawkeye II. It was not only equipped with tanks for hauling fish but with the finest of office, living, and dining quarters.

two years before his death in 1936, directing fisheries work in Iowa. He had visited every lake and stream in Iowa and had tramped up and down many miles of shore with seining crews, fish rescue crews, and for surveys of fish population. He was considered one of the best-informed authorities on fish in the nation.

The Fish and Game department built a number of bass ponds on the isthmus when Mr. Hinshaw was its head. There was an old building on the site, used for equipment.

In the spring of 1915, Mr. Baur set up a battery of hatching jars in the old building and began hatching walleyed pike for Iowa fishermen. Since that time hatching of perch has been tried without much success, and a walleyed pike hatchery has been established at Clear lake.

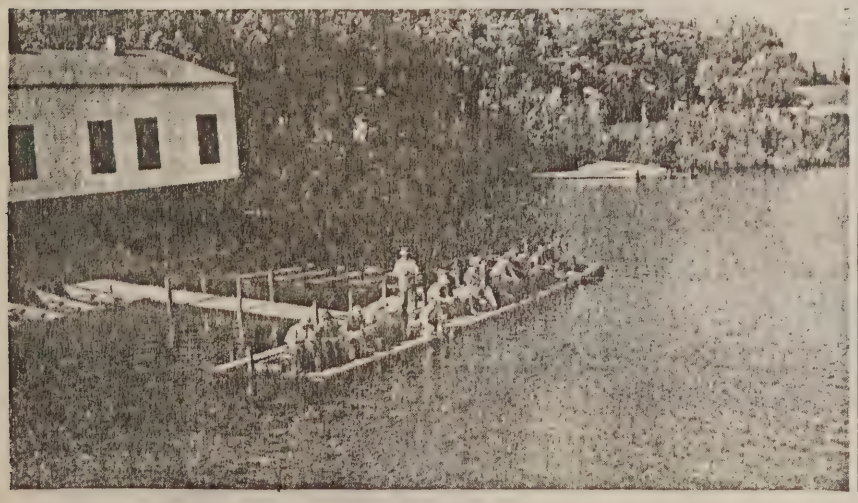
The old building was used a year and Parker Dunham of Orleans was Mr. Bauer's helper. He has continued with the work until recent years. He remembers the best year during Mr. Baur's time was a hatch of 115 million pike.

The new and modern hatchery building was constructed a year after the work started. It was built to be the finest then known for the hatching of pike eggs. It was equipped with two batteries and 355 jars, supposedly enough equipment to handle three hundred million eggs. These eggs are estimated at 175,000 per quart by the United States Bureau of Fisheries. The measure was set up by counting the number in a square inch, then by multiplication to get the number in a quart.

There was an old wooden building, torn down each season and stored at the hatchery grounds, that was used in the Okoboji area many years. That was finally replaced, some time after 1920, by the modern brick stripping station that now stands on East Okoboji at the south end of the railroad bridge.

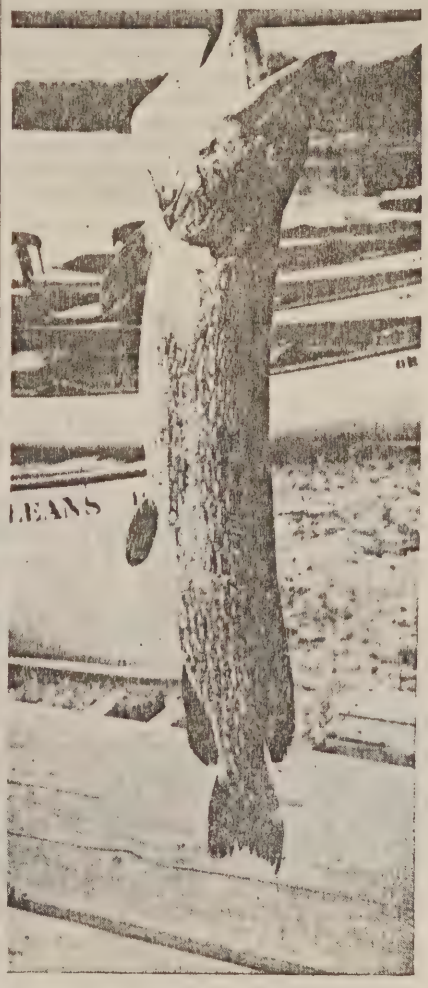
Except for the time the pike eggs are being cared for in the hatchery, the building is used for equipment storage and repair, and for office and laboratory work required in this area. The Fish and Game Department was re-organized by the legislature some years ago into the present State Conservation Commission to consolidate all conservation and fisheries work under one state department. The main office has long since been in Des Moines.

Early Fishing



Scene at Okoboji store dock when fish begin to strike in the spring.

Worth Catching



This is one of the reasons Spirit lake is a famous fishing lake.

"One of the most fantastic . . . ."

Most Fantastic Story — Army Plane Falls into Spirit Lake

One of the most fantastic news stories ever to go out from the Okoboji-Spirit lake region was that of the plunge of a United States army observation plane and its three passengers into Spirit lake on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 10, 1940. Not only the incident in itself, but the elements combined to make the accident utterly unbelievable even to those who were at the scene first.

That Sunday, a number of hunters and families had been around the lake in their cottages or at cafes on the lakeshore, because it was a fine fall day until rain began falling early in the evening.

At about 6:30 o'clock, those persons who were at the lake near Stoney point on the east shore of Spirit lake, heard an airplane circle about overhead. They heard the motor apparently "cut", and then they heard a loud splash. Everyone rushed outside but nothing could be seen. By that time it was dark and a misty rain falling to make the lake appear shrouded in heavy fog. No sound came from the water.

Officers were summoned at once from Spirit Lake and the few available boats were put out in the rain and fog to look for something. Those who had heard the airplane were positive they had heard one and just as positive it had gone into the lake a short way off Stoney point. The fog got worse, outboards refused to start, and even those men who went out in the boats were highly skeptical that such a fantastic thing could happen. Two boats, later, reported having smelled the peculiar odor of water on hot metal, but both attributed that to an outboard passing on the windward side.

At about 9:30, the search was about to be abandoned for the night, because it was a murky black night with rain coming harder every hour, and the thing was too much to believe. At about that time, a newspaper phoned to its correspondent in the lake region asking that airports be checked because an army observation plane was missing and was due to pass over the lake region late in the afternoon.

The news was relayed to the workers at Stoney point, and they again went onto the lake. Some of them walked the shore of Spirit lake on both sides of the point itself. They found nothing after searching past midnight.

Snow had started to fall with the rain at about 11 o'clock that Sunday night and by daylight Monday the entire midwest was engulfed in the now-famous howling blizzard. Nearly a foot of snow fell and visibility was less than 100 feet. Roads were drifted shut, a fierce northwest wind churned the lakes, and everyone whose business didn't absolutely require going outside, stayed inside.

Sheriff J. L. McQuirk, Deputy Sheriff Jack Daugherty, and Dr. B. W. Jones, coroner, braved the winds and drifts and patrolled the lakeshore near Stoney point, although they could stand the weather for only about five minutes at a time. They found nothing, but reports from Omaha revealed the airplane was still missing. It had taken off at St. Paul, enroute to Fort Crook near Omaha. Even then, many persons believed the plane had been forced down and its occupants would phone in from some farm house as soon as the storm was over.

During Monday night, Spirit lake's waters began freezing and the search was almost at a standstill. The wind held and pounded shell ice onto shore for many feet.

Tuesday morning, some duck hunters who had ventured out in the storm to that part of the lake, found wreckage of the airplane, part of one wing, and the body of Lieut. Robert M. Prange, 22, of Frederickstown, Mo., pilot. His body was badly battered by the waves and his seat was still strapped to his body. However, tragic as it was, finding of the young flyer's body was the first positive proof that the airplane had dropped into the lake.

Tuesday afternoon rescue parties took to boats in the heavy wind, and that night the wind went down and the lake froze, to bring another stop to the search. Another army airplane was sent from Fort Crook to circle over the spot but located nothing. An automobile load of officers from there became snowbound before reaching here.

For several days, searchers were unable to go onto the thin ice. Then the state seining crews from the fish hatchery at Orleans were called upon and considered putting a seine under the ice in an attempt to locate the bodies. Late in the week small holes were cut in the ice to probe for wreckage. But it was not until Sunday afternoon, before the ice was thick enough to hold seining equipment, that oil was found under the ice and the wreckage was found by one of the army officers here to aid in the work.

Monday morning, Nov. 18, the seining crew workmen put barges into the lake and built a hoist between the two. They worked until nearly noon raising

Lake Tragedy

Shows men working to lift part of the wreckage of the army plane. Two bodies were taken out of this mass of wreckage. The picture was taken by R. C. Naper of the Naper Photo shop in Spirit Lake and widely published at the time.

the wreckage and turning it to permit removal of the bodies of Lieut. G. Smith, 26, of Clinton, Ill., and Private Anthony Cerrato, 22, of Canton, Ohio.

The huge plane had evidently rolled along the bottom of the lake across the rocks of Stoney point, and resembled a huge metallic ball. It was as crumpled as a ball of tissuepaper flung carelessly at a wastebasket. Because of the thin ice, only the workers and officials were allowed at the actual scene of the operations, several hundred feet northwest and on the west side of Stoney point. About 200 persons from all parts of the lake territory stood on shore to watch the operations.

The army officers from Fort Crook who came here to take charge of the search were high in their praise of the local officers and workmen and declared them so efficient that the search was left in local hands almost entirely. They declared that the cause of the accident must remain supposition because of its nature, that had it occurred on land there would have been marks in the earth to tell the tale. As it was, all of the plane was under water and nothing could be learned from the wreckage.

No satisfactory explanation was ever given of the tragedy, although many were offered. It was explained that big ships are most often set down on ponds when in distress because few of the airports can accommodate them and less damage is done to the ship. It was learned that they had evidently been searching for a landing place a few miles east of Spirit lake. It was also thought they might have been slightly off their course, looking for landmarks, and did not realize they were above the big and deep lakes.

The army officers who helped, said evidently the pilot had been going some 200 miles an hour when the plane struck the water, had the window open and might have discovered too late that he was on a lake instead of a shallow pond, and in trying to gun the ship for an ascent had been caught by the tip of a wing and drawn into the water. The landing gears were retracted, which was also another point for speculation for those who believed he was trying to land.

The eyes of the nation were focused on Spirit lake for that entire week, just as they had been on many mountain tops in past years, and since. Part of the interest was due, of course, to the fantastic aspects of the thing, an airplane falling into a lake when there were almost no other lakes between St. Paul and Omaha.

Junk

Showing a truck piled high with some of the wreckage salvaged from the lake bottom.

"The plunge of the . . . ."

Toll in Drownings Has Been Constant; Total Surprisingly Low

The plunge of the United States Army airplane into Spirit lake Sunday night, Nov. 10, 1940, caused the re-telling of many tragedies at the lakes. These stories run all the way from covered-wagon days to the fantastic-but-true story of the airplane.

In local drowning history, the story so filled with tragedy that the minute details are still recalled by oldtimers, was that of the Evans family that resided along the lakeshore in what is now Okoboji town, on East Okoboji lake. It was a double tragedy, midwinter, and the total toll was five young persons in two drownings.

Miss Adda Evans went to Spencer to visit. One Sunday late in January, her sister Nora and Jim Mackintosh drove to Spencer to get her. Enroute home, and just a short distance from their lakeshore home, they drove into the lake and all three drowned. It was in the darkness of early morning and they drove into a hole from which ice had been removed for storage. The bridge was out at the time and all traffic was across the ice.

Residents of the lake region near enough to the scene, could hear their cries for help but were unable to locate the young persons in the lake because of darkness and the deceiving echoes on the water and ice.

The body of the horse came up in the hole the next day, carrying with it the body of one of the girls. It was supposed she had managed to get onto the horse during the struggle. The bodies of the other girl and the youth were located that week Friday. The tragedy had been early Monday morning. They were taken out of the lake on Saturday.

Four years later, almost to the day late in January, two brothers of the Evans girls, Matt and Walter, were also drowned. They skated into an open airhole off Pike's point on West Okoboji, in the daytime.

There had been a rain and it was foggy. The ice was thin with many airholes and rescuers were unable to get to the youths or accurately locate their position. Those seeking to aid them could hear the two talking to each other and could plainly hear their calls for help. One of the youths took off his skates and tried to cut holes in the ice to hold on. The other was grasping his pocket knife, for the same purpose, when found. Searchers next day found one hat drifting on the water, and thus located the bodies.

Jared Palmer, one of the men most widely known in the first settlement after the massacre, was rescued from an icy grave off Templar point in Spirit lake some sixty or seventy years ago. He drove a team into a hole in the ice. The team drowned.

Another early-day tragedy was that

of the family that came in a covered wagon, a man and his wife and six children. They settled on Spirit lake. One day he went fishing and a storm came up while he was on the lake. Lightning struck him off Kingman point on Spirit lake and his body was thrown into the lake. The man with him was unharmed.

There is another story told of a woman who was killed by a bolt of lightning from a clear sky, as she stood on the shore near Fort Dodge point on West Okoboji, several decades ago.

Only the old timers know the story of the Cedar Rapids choir boy and the bravery that cost his life in Spirit lake. More than fifty years ago, when the steamer "Queen" was very new and in service on Spirit lake, a group of choir boys were brought on an outing from Cedar Rapids by the rector, Dr. Green.

Giving First Aid

Scene on a dock at the state pier while physicians and first aid workers were trying to revive the five girls from Orange City.

As they were riding on the boat one day, a little girl's hat blew off. She leaned over the side of the boat to get it, and fell in. The best singer, and the best swimmer among the boys, jumped in after her. The lifeboat (the steamer originally had one) put out and rescued the girl but the boy drowned.

A lake tragedy still recalled is that of Bertha Klein, 16, who drowned a short ways from her home on East Okoboji lake when a boat capsized. She was a member of a pioneer family, with a brother and a girl friend. They were going by rowboat from the Klein home near where the highway now crosses East Okoboji lake, to Spirit Lake. It was Sunday afternoon, April 7, 1888. Bertha rowed until they were near the town side of the shore and then asked her brother to continue. In changing places, the boat upset. Workmen dragged the lake all night and found the girl the next day. She, of a large family, was the only one who did not "swim like a fish."

Another story was of a lake tragedy that happened about Thanksgiving time, 1903. Martin Rector, about 30, and a companion, a Mr. Montieth, skated into an airhole on the upper part of East Okoboji lake, enroute from the Rector farm to town. Their bodies were recovered the next day. Search began two hours after their disappearance, when the wife of Mr. Rector became anxious. The man had previously hauled grain over the spot where the airhole opened.

Another winter tragedy very nearly claimed many lives when a station bus filled with ice field workers dropped partly into an airhole on Spirit lake as they were going to work early one morning several decades ago. The driver of the bus, one of the old enclosed type with a driver up front, and the team, was drowned. His name was Zenor. The men inside the bus got out safely.

It would be impossible to count all or even arrive at an accurate figure of the drownings in the lake region since its settlement. The first victim was a boy named Birdsay, who went into the bay at Okoboji just as the ice had formed. His body was recovered and is buried in the Okoboji cemetery at Arnolds Park.

There have been many drownings of the almost-unknown type. Numerous small children have tumbled from docks to be found dead in shallow water later. About thirty years ago two men were missing for some days and their bodies washed ashore at opposite ends of the lake.

About thirty years ago a youth drowned between The Inn and Fort Dodge point, while dozens of persons looked on and were unable to help. He had a small sailboat and it came about so quickly that it knocked him overboard. Onlookers thought the boom hit him in the head and made him unconscious.

His parents had a cottage on Fort Dodge point. People along The Inn beach and the point went to his aid but did not find his body for several days. His parents, like many others who have lost loved ones in the lake, never came back.

The tragedy of the "Miss Thriller" on West Okoboji July 29, 1929, in which nine persons were drowned, was the major lake accident. Next in line was the accident of July 14, 1934, when five young women from Orange City were drowned. They, with two other girls, were at the lake on a houseparty, and had gone swimming on the reef of Pillsbury's point. The girls had hold of hands and were trying to walk on the under-water and mossy rocks. One slipped, pulled the others under one at a time. The last two in line, nearest the shore, were saved. The others, including the chaperone, were recovered that same day.

That year the lakes claimed ten victims. Memorial day two young persons, cousins, from Rock Valley, Iowa, were drowned when their over-loaded rowboat capsized off Pillsbury's point. A large holiday crowd saw the accident from the amusement park and later, the drowning of the five young women, and looked on helplessly. Short as the intervening space of water was, help could not reach any of them in time.

The drowning of Mrs. E. S. Gaynor of Sioux City, in 1935, made headlines over the nation. She disappeared from her cottage on West Okoboji lake at Miller's bay, on the afternoon of April 26. She was last seen by CCC workmen at the Gull Point state park, as she was paddlingg a canoe in the middle of the lake. Search for her body continued for a week, while it was rumored she had been seen in various places. The body, clad in a heavy winter coat, washed ashore near her cottage on the afternoon of June 11.

A headline-making episode on Spirit lake took place that same year. Edward Wenner, 21, of Waterloo, was drowned out of a party of four young persons employed at Templar park for the season. They set out in a canoe with a sailboat, early in the evening of Sunday, June 23, as the annual Knights Templar conclave was beginning. The canoe upset in the middle of the lake. One youth reached shore and gave the alarm. The two girls drifted all night with the canoe they had managed to right, and young Wenner slipped off and into the darkness during the night. It was one of the wildest nights on the lake that residents can recall, with a high wind whipping the water furiously.

A drowning in 1935 had a mysterious angle that brought agents here from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was that of Lawrence Stapp, 45, of Houston, Texas. He came here July 22, 1935, and was married that day to a Minnesota woman. Next day she sat in their car at Terrace park while he

went swimming. Another swimmer found a lifeless body under a dock 200 yards from the car, and it was identified as Stapp. It was believed, for a time, that another body had been substituted in some fraud, but the FBI agent who came here was evidently assured the body was that of Stapp. They let it be known Stapp allegedly pulled a similar stunt in the south.

The drowning of Thomas Foster, 25, on the afternoon of August 20, 1937, was full of tragedy and headlines. With his young wife, he was sailing across the lake. She fell into the water and he jumped in after her. Their boat sailed away. They were so far from shore their cries for help could not be heard.

Residents along the Manhattan shore finally noticed the unusual action of the crewless sailboat and put out to see what was wrong. They arrived to see young Foster's head disappear and to save Mrs. Foster. Indian John, the famous Minnesota rescuer, was brought here and a diver came from Chicago, but neither could locate the Sioux Falls youth. The body floated ashore at Gull point, Sept. 4.

The toll of the lakes is never constant. Some years there are no drownings, other years there are many. Most of them happen either on lonely stretches of beach where swimmers are unprotected and help cannot be at hand, or result from noise and failure to observe safety rules.

The list of the lakes dead for the ten years 1931-41, typical of this region, is fifty, as follows:

1929—nine, on the "Miss Thriller." 1930—none. 1931—two: Charles Wahl, 25, Lakefield, Minn., farmer, at Terrace park, 10 p.m. July 18, cramps; Clyde A. Page, 29, Humboldt, East Okoboji, opposite Camp Foster, on picnic dinner with family, 11 a.m., stepped off into deep water, July 26.

1932—two: George Michaelson, Jr., 5, Sioux City, fell off a dock at the Methodist Camp Grounds, July 28; J. E. Reid, 26, Cedar Rapids, 5:30 p.m., Kruse's beach, East Okoboji lake, July 30, may have been shock. 1933—four: Walter Brown, 28, farmer east of Arnolds Park, near Lower Gar lake at Spring run, 3 p.m. April 4, possibly heart disease; Herman J. Warms, mayor of Calumet, Iowa, and Gus Linnewah, grocer at Calumet, upset in canvas boat near Egralharve, 7 p.m., July 2; Elson Hinckley, Jr., 7, Des Moines, fell off dock at Camp Foster on East Okoboji lake, July 4.

1934—ten: Miss Nellie Blankespoor, 21, and her cousin, Cornelius Blankespoor, 22, of Rock Valley, overloaded rowboat upset off Pillsbury's point, 3:50 p.m., May 30; Miss Margaret Blackburn, 26, of Davenport, chaperone, and Wilhelmina Muilenburg, 18, Vera Muilenburg, 18, Elsie Herwynen, 19, and Wilma Duimstra, 19, all of Orange City, on Pillsbury's point, 11:30 a.m., July 14; Raymond Hervert, 28, Iowa City, neck broken on water wheel at Peck's beach in Arnolds Park, 7 p.m., Aug. 14; Frank Baysore, 52, Sioux Falls, S. Dak., Peck's beach, 7 a.m., probably over-exertion, Aug. 20; S. G. Palmer, 78, Silver lake at Lake Park, early morning, Oct. 31, while fishing.

1935—three: Mrs. Gaynor, Edward Wenner, A. Lawrence Stapp. 1936—Herbert Gilfillen, 14, Des Moines, 6:30 p.m., East Okoboji lake near Arthur farm; Frederick Bleuer, 44, West Bend, fell overboard while fishing, middle of Spirit lake, 6 p.m., July 28; Stanley Nickels, 19, Jackson, Minn., 4:30 p.m., Aug. 23, gravel pit near Terril.

1937—seven: Hollis Daniels, 5, fell off dock, upper end East Okoboji, 5 p.m., June 6; Charles Logan, 5, fell off dock at Hayward's bay, 4:30 p.m., June 15; Thomas Etsales, 38, Denison, capsized boat near north shore Spirit lake, 4 p.m., June 17; John Puckett, 17, Des Moines, East Okoboji in Gingle's bay, 7 a.m., Aug 8; Thomas Foster; Gus Soderberg, 62, Albert City, heart disease, near Pike's point, 4 p.m., Sept 8; Mrs. Catherine Stammer, 81, Spirit lake, fell off Daniels dock on East Okoboji, 10:30 a.m., Sept. 15.

1938—None. 1939—None. 1940—one: Teddy Thompson, 5, fell off Pike's point boat livery dock, arm in plaster cast, June 20; three army aviators, Spirit Lake, 6:30 p.m., Nov. 10.

1941—six: Herbert Kiehne, 32, Jackson, Mo., fell out of canoe in Miller's bay, 5:15 p.m., July 23; Luella Webber, 18, Armstrong, suffocation while swimming, Terrace park beach, 3:30 p.m., Aug. 3; Marvin Leo Carlson, 24, Neola, south shore Spirit lake, 6:30 p.m., Aug. 6, fright; Frank Lee, 45, Spirit lake, and Howard N. Peterson, 44, and Edward Arnold Johansen, 21, both of Newell, in Spirit lake while fishing, night of Oct. 17.

Although the total seems big for these northwest Iowa lakes, the toll might have been much, much larger. The number of rescues, dramatic and otherwise, reaches into large figures over the same period of time. They, as well as the drownings, occurred in all kinds of weather and under many varying circumstances.

"Grandfathers of the prairies . . . ."

Winter of 1935-36 One for Grandpas To Tell The Grandchildren

Grandfathers of the prairies were always obliging about stories of the great blizzards. To every generation, perhaps, nature gives a weather story worth repeating down through the years. Such was the weather of the famous winter of 1935-36, when the entire midwest was locked in to play rummy and catch up on the mending, for several months.

It was a winter to provide plenty of material for the grandfathers of 1996 and their stories to the grandchildren. It was the worst winter in 116 years, so the world was told, and the claim was backed up by weather bureau records. Nobody doubted the weather man, it wasn't at all necessary to start that kind of an argument. Those who lived through it were unanimous that it was

Winter Scene

Stevens beach winter scene, probably about 1915.

enough, and nobody wanted a return engagement.

The Iowa lake region didn't escape, although comparisons showed that it didn't receive all the elements lavished upon other sections of the midwest.

Summer residents, scattered to the far parts of the nation, heard daily on their radio of the lake region's hard winter. One telegraphic weather report was repeated widely through the nation and is still recalled by newspaper editors and radio broadcasters as a classic for that bleak day. The report was simply "No trains, no mail, no anything but snow." It came on a day when no trains had been through for a week and the whole world seemed to be completely stalled.

For benefit of those summer visitors who ask if the lakes freeze over, and others who ask if they freeze solid—Ice froze West Okoboji lake over on the night of Dec. 10, and kept it locked in until April 13.

Ice on the big lake was 34 inches deep, and may have been a few inches thicker on the smaller lakes, which froze somewhat earlier. Howard F. Graesing, weather observer at Orleans, reported exactly five feet of snow from Nov. 20 to Feb. 23, inclusive, and there was more after that.

Blizzard followed blizzard and each brought tales of hardships on farm and in town. Schools were closed, churches had to abandon services a time or two, movies ran out of film and had to close. Once a Spirit Lake baker drove to the end of the line behind a snowplow, walked across the wind-swept country to a truck coming from the other way. He packed a supply of yeast into a sack, and returned to his waiting car.

Grandfather stocking caps, and sacks slung over the backs of the menfolk, were common sights in town. Farmers came to town in bobsleds, when they could come at all, over the fences like grandfather did.

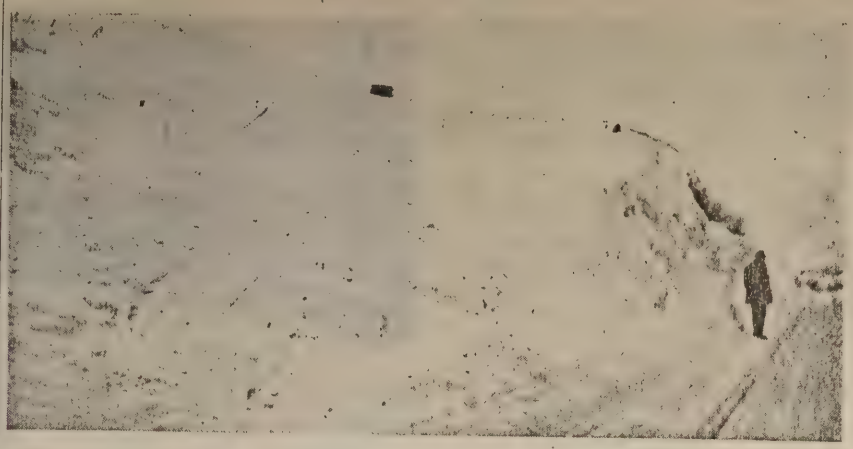
Babies were born in snowbound homes, and doctors and nurses enacted thrilling dramas getting to and from farms isolated by the snow. People died and burials were when weather permitted.

It was estimated that half of the bird population of the county was killed by the drifting snow, inability to get feed, and cold. That applied to some extent also to the fish population locked in the lower lakes without the regular oxygen supply normal in winter months and provided by thawing of the ice surface.

People didn't actually go hungry but they didn't dine as they were accustomed. Grocery supplies became low when trains and trucks couldn't get in with additional food stuffs and meats. Mostly, the people ate what they could get and were glad of it. There was no actual coal shortage here.

Although at one time there were no trains and no mail for a week, the lake region had constant communication with

See The Birdie?



The railroad cut that divides the Brooks beach cottages, winter 1935-36. Note birdhouse, on pole at top of cut.

The Ice Goes Out

The ice was actually moving when this picture was taken. It was of ice cube proportions in a great sheet down the lake. Picture taken in front of The Inn.

The Ice Goes Out

There are often strange ice formations to be seen when the ice begins to push in the spring. This was taken on the south shore of Spirit lake.

After The Storm

Along Benit's Arcade, winter of 1935-36.

The Ice Goes Out

The morning after the ice went out of West Okoboji lake, about 1934. Pike's point. Picture by Ned Perrin.

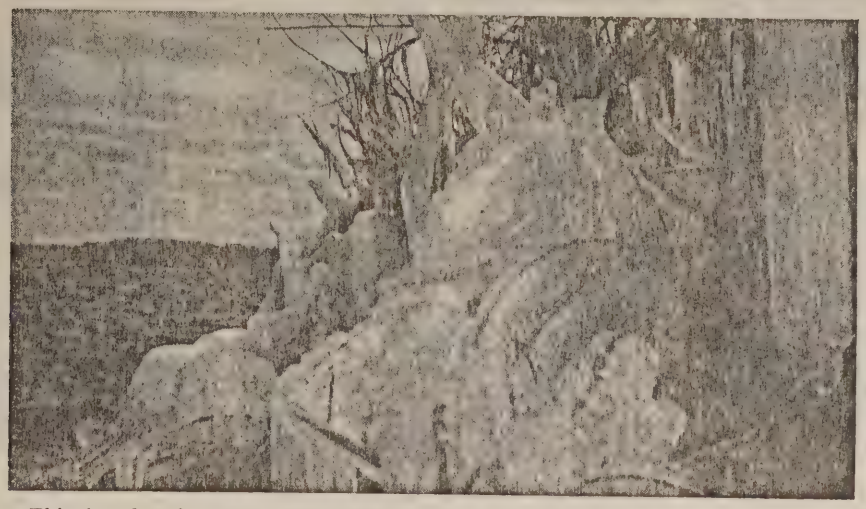
Lakefront Road

Drift in front of Benit's Arcade, winter 1935-36.

Winter Scene

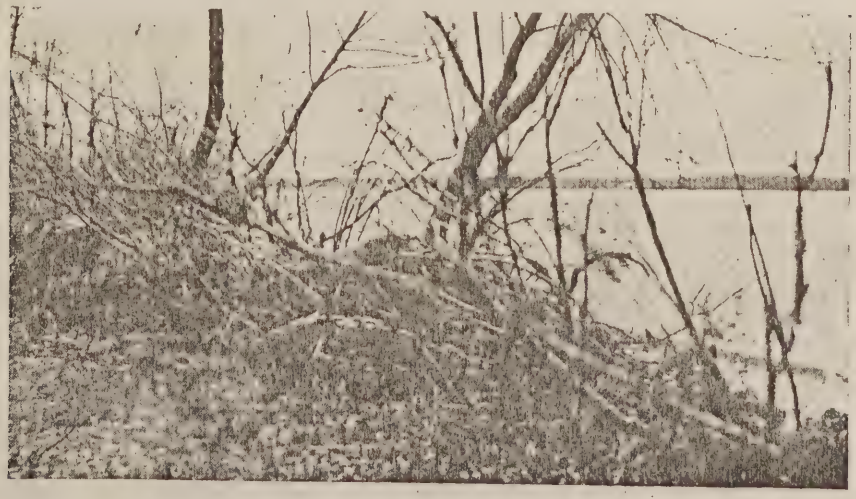
Williamz snow scene in amusement park. Shows the old Lakeside store and dance pavilion when it still sat in the street. Probably 1915.

Fantastic Icicles



This is what happens when there is a strong wind and freezing weather.

The Ice Goes Out



This was not wreckage from a tornado—the ice shoved against a tree-lined shore along Gull point.

the outside world by telephone and telegraph. Linemen worked on snowshoes but they kept the lines operating. Radio was, of course, a major blessing and the only source of news from the outside world for the majority of the people.

Some statistics are interesting, and may be valuable for grandfathers of 1996. For instance: From Jan. 1, 1936 when it was 35 above zero, to Feb. 23, 1936, when it was 44 above zero, there was no day during which the mercury stayed above zero. There were 38 days when the mercury was below zero all or part of each 24 hours. For 32 days it was ten below or more. For 25 days it was 15 below, or more. The highest reading in that period was 28 above, on Jan. 28. The lowest was 32 below, on Jan. 22. Lowest readings were usually between 8 and 9 a.m., instead of the usual "zero hours" of midnight to 3 a.m.

Snow fell so fast and drifted so badly that a railroad engine was completely covered at Terril and buried for over thirty days. Tales go on, almost endlessly,—it really was some winter! That was the one that had "Red Sails in the Sunset"—and the one when the "Music Went Round and Round" and came out here! 'member?

Fishing

When the lake freezes solid before Nov. 30, lake region folk get a big thrill fishing through the ice.

Pulling Nets

This is how the nets are pulled under the ice for winter gill-net fishing.

Spring

This is what happens when the ice shoves against a sandy shore—east side of Gull point.

"Until the late afternoon . . . ."

Terrible Destruction Left By Tornado In Terrace Park Area, 1936

Until late afternoon of April 30, 1936, the residents of the Iowa lake region had lived secure in the belief that a tornado couldn't come here. It was believed that the lakes would prevent such a storm from striking, and because there had never been one in the 79 years of settlement, the belief was securely fixed. There had been occasional hard storms and a few cottage roofs damaged, but tornados couldn't happen here.

It was a hot, sultry afternoon and people of the lake region were sweltering. About 4 o'clock a storm approached and the skies became angry black. Then it began to rain, in torrents, followed by hail. The stones ranged from marble-sized in the Spirit Lake area to those resembling hens' eggs at Arnolds Park and south.

With the storm came the tornado, roaring out of the southwest into the northeast. It approached the lakes from the one direction least protected by water which is supposedly a natural barrier to a tornado.

The storm struck first northeast of Everly and as it approached the lakes it rose above the Little Sioux river and swooped down again with renewed fury southwest of Terrace park. It tore through two farms and into the Terrace park cottage section.

Persons who were in that area said the winds howled and hissed down upon them through the south part of the park area, and then turned toward the lake. It struck across the bay toward Pocahontas point with a great geyser of water pulled into the air. The wind then apparently turned upon itself and swung back across the end of the lake to the highway and farmhouse.

The tornado lifted again and passed completely over Arnolds Park and the East Okoboji lake area without the residents there even surmising the extent of the storm, and came down again along the side of Estherville. The tornado rose there once more and swooped down again to do further destruction in Fairmont county, Minnesota.

The damage in this section was estimated at around $1,000,000 of which more than half was in the Dickinson county area. Two persons were killed

before the tornado struck the lakeshore, Mrs. Julius Heuer and Herman Roskens, both near Everly. The woman was torn from her husband's arms as he sought to carry her to a cellar. She had just given birth to a baby a few days before. Roskens was crushed to death when the wind hurled a large horse onto him, in the barnyard. Two more were killed in Minnesota.

The storm struck the lake area at approximately 4:15 o'clock. The potentialities of the tornado are still staggering to the imagination, after realization of the actual damage. What if the storm had struck during the heavy summer tourist season? What if it had plowed through the four large schools in the storm area?

Children were just leaving the Okoboji Consolidated school southwest of Milford, when the storm grazed through the schoolyard and as busses were leaving the crossroads. Milford school busses from the public and parochial schools were heading toward the area. The Arnolds Park school was just out, and two busses heading into the storm. One driver ran his bus into a deep roadside ditch when he saw the storm ahead, thus saving the children from possible death and injury.

Torrential rain and hail followed the storm, and the air chilled. Within a few hours a dense fog closed down about the lakes and made traveling extremely hazardous.

Telephone service was broken and messages were relayed long distances to call in doctors and nurses to the Milford hospital and other stricken areas. The hospital there looked like a dressing station at a war field hospital, for hours. Several persons were confined there for some weeks. Thirteen were seriously hurt, every person in the storm area was cut and bruised.

Volunteers from Milford and surrounding towns were sent to the country districts immediately to rescue farm animals and aid in whatever the emergency had provided for them to do. Many ex-soldiers said the night was reminiscent of many spent on French battlefields. Injured animals could be heard and not located. Hundreds of living things were killed in the most terrible way or injured. Some were merely stunned, especially the chickens and other fowls that looked plucked.

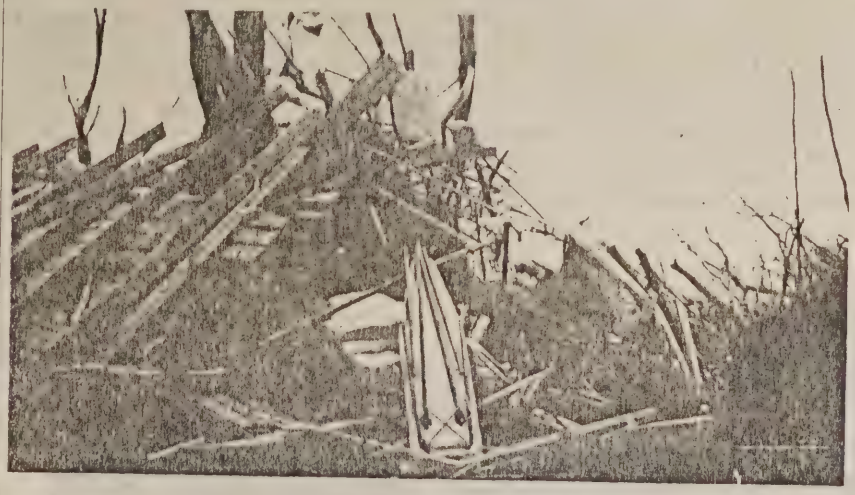
The tornado leveled about 25 cottages in the Terrace park area, including the widely-known "Rodome" tearoom. Its furnishings were strung out in a straight line to the southeast. Motorists were blown off the road and across the fence at that spot on the highway, like matches in a wind. Candy from one truck was strewn over a large area from the truck inside the fence.

The tornado passed over the south and east grounds of the Casino ballroom building, ruined many of the trees, but

Rodome Wreckage

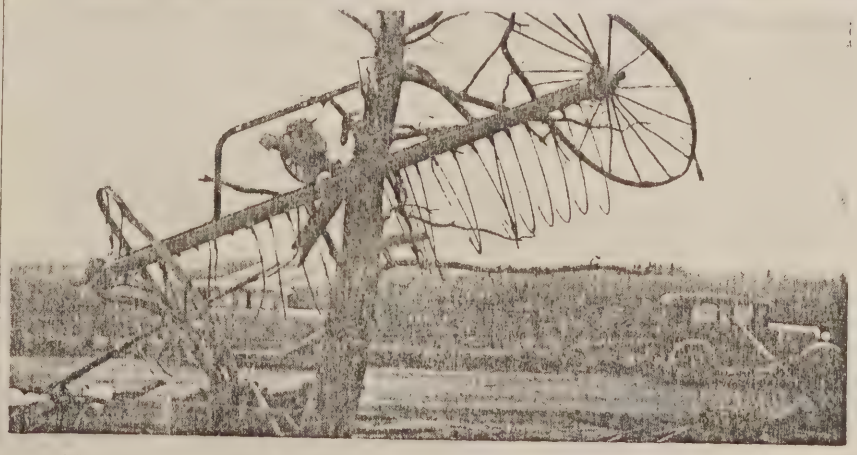
Wreckage of the Rodome, smart lakeshore tearoom, at Terrace park.

Somebody's Cottage



Wreckage of a cottage at Terrace park.

On Terrace Park Road



Wreckage in a farm yard across the road south from Terrace park.

did no damage to the building. Even the fragile flagpoles were left intact.

The inevitable looting and souvenir-hunting started the next day and even that night when crowds began to pour into the region to see the sights. Workmen from the CCC camp at Milford were placed on guard duty at Terrace park. Others were sent to the farm areas to give all possible aid.

The American Red Cross, represented by L. M. Williamson of the field staff, arrived Saturday and took charge of the relief and rehabilitation program. Miss Katherine Monroe, a disaster relief worker, was brought here from Wheeling, W. Va., where she had been aiding after the floods when 3,000 were left homeless. She stated the tornado here wrought "unusual damage" and left the "largest percentage of total destruction" she had encountered in many years of disaster relief.

The Red Cross spent $3,275.89 in relief and rehabilitation work in Dickinson county, including everything from dishes to livestock and farm machinery. The people of Dickinson county raised $1,393.67 and donated many articles direct to tornado victims and a huge amount of wearing apparel, bedding, and household furnishings to be distributed through the Red Cross. Funds were also sent in by donations in other parts of the state.

Coming as it did after many spring crops were in, the tornado struck doubly at farmers of the area. Over fifty farms were affected in some way by the storm. Crops came up in places far distant from their original plantings. Bits of furniture, and even a rug from a farmer's living room, were found in neighboring fields when crops were cultivated. Some cancelled checks, letters, and pictures from the Milford area were found in Minnesota after the storm.

Renee Jacobs, 14, was at a Terrace park cottage, and was buffeted about by the storm but lived to tell the story. Two of the cottages where he was visiting, were wrecked. Not even the wreckage of one was ever found.

Road-building machinery, at work on the road south of Terrace park, was twisted and workmens' automobiles thrown about like chips.

Hail Stones

Hailstones on a cookie sheet, picked up in Arnolds Park.

The usual freakish things happened, by the scores. Straws were blown through metal disks; sauce pans were pounded into tree trunks; a potato was found in a closed car; a statue of a saint still stood serenely on a mantle after the cottage had been blown away; hogs unhurt by the storm, gorged themselves at corn from which cribs had been blown away; bark was torn from trees; a gigantic axe apparently split many trees; a farm rake was hung on a tree limb and a piano was left in its place when the house was blown away; an automobile was wrapped neatly around a tree and wreckers had a hard time getting it free; houses were cut in two as neatly as if by a gigantic knife thrust.

Traffic reached an all-time high in the lake region on the Sunday following the tornado. Thousands of persons jammed into the area to see the wreckage. Cars in a long procession from Spencer through the lake region to and beyond Estherville, looked from the air like one long line of cars. The line also extended along country roads to the farming territory worst struck by the tornado. Many volunteers from nearby towns directed the country traffic. It moved at snail's pace all day.

Merchants and professional men from surrounding towns gave several days' time helping farmers put their fences up and start their work again. Some of the wrecked homes were immediately rebuilt, some not at all.

The route of the tornado is still clearly defineable in Dickinson county, although new trees are now growing and the worst of the ruin has been repaired.

The Terrace park area still shows the most scars from the tornado. Only a few cottages replace those leveled by the storm. Many cottage-owners never returned to clear away the debris. Many of the 6,000 trees planted by the late Dr. H. O. Green were ruined and others still show the violence of the storm.

See The Casino?

The tornado made a clean sweep from the lake up to the highway. The Casino building may be seen center.

"Four score and eight . . . ."

Veteran

Four score years and eight have marked lightly his face and squared shoulders. He uses a cane, to be sure, but methinks the trick was learned when all smart young men carried them.

Every day I see him there on an old bench outside the busiest garage. His hair is white and thin; his shoulders bespeak great strength in early manhood; the smile and twinkling blue eyes are young as youth.

What if his pants are a bit rusty and his hands tremble as matches die in his attempts at lighting his corn-cob pipe as it teeters a bit on shrunken gums? His pockets are full of matches bummed off the "boys" who drop by for a chat. For he will be the last to re-enlist and join the company of unseen warriors marching back into yesterday—he's the last veteran of our town—the kindly czar of his auto-seat domain. (1929)

"Last night the Great Bugle . . . ."

Bugle Call

Last night the Great Bugle sounded. No more will "the boys" hold court about the kindly czar of the auto-seat domain. No more will his cane rise and fall in mimic gesture. Today he is stepping in that line of invisible marching men, the Boys of '61, back into Yesterday, forward into Eternity.

His pants were a bit rusty and his step was slow. For it was three score years and more since he marched with Company B, Forty-fifth Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry, to the siege of Atlanta, on the march to the sea, and in the campaign of Carolina.

The Great Engraver marked his brow lightly and I could find there much that was great and good. There couldn't have been much of craven memory behind those eyes. The hands that held his cane accomplished much of the hard work that went into the building of a community on the shores of these Okoboji lakes. Stories from his lips have thrilled many a school-child with lessons in patriotism.

George Elston died at his home early Wednesday morning, Aug. 13. He had been a resident of this community since 1880. He was the last veteran of our town. He was my grandad. (1930)

"She was so little . . . ."

My Grandma

She was so little—my grandma. I've a picture, taken when my first kodak was very new. It is one of the few ever taken of her. She stood beside the fence post that was part of our front gate, and she wasn't "fixed up", so she looks just like my grandma in her gray Mother Hubbard and hood. She wasn't much taller than the gatepost.

Almost nobody in town knew my grandma, unless they went to my grandma's house. Twice a year she went to town on the train to buy goods to make clothing for her family. The rest of the time she stayed home. She rarely came over to my house across the road. I went to her house.

And how I loved going over to her house, just across the road! Grandma made the grandest bread in the world and I always managed to get there when she was taking it out of the oven, those big fat loaves. Grandma cut off a heel, spread it thick with butter from the bowl on the table, and sprinkled it lavishly with brown sugar from the can in the buttery. Then we sat on the back porch while I ate the world's most marvelous confection.

Once, my grandma patched a favorite dress, probably torn while climbing a fence. But her tiny stitches gave the whole thing away when my mother saw the patch next ironing day.

It was always good to run across the road and sit with grandma and talk over things—her affairs, and mine.

My grandma was the belle of many a ball when she was Sweet Sixteen, light-footed and gay, but she left that all behind when she and her little brood came with grandpa to the frontier when my father was just a little boy. She reared her tall sons on the frontier and made them honest, hard-working men who did their big share in building of the area, and daughters.

Once, when grandma was alone with her small children, she heard the chilling noises that might mean Indians. Grandpa got home in time and it was the rustling of the leaves. After that, grandma was always afraid of the dark.

My grandma lived and brought all of her family through the bitter years when there was never quite enough to eat and clothes were made by hand; when her family was the equal of all frontier families and their fare the same. She heard about the progress of cottage-building and big days at the park, but she never saw them. She never went that far away from home, although the highway did push past her door and cars went roaring by. She was content to stay at home, where the water from her well was the sweetest in the world and a cool pitcherful was the last thing on her table every meal; and where her boys all came home to "see maw" every morning.

Almost nobody knew my grandma, unless they went to my grandma's house. Almost everybody knew my grandpa because he worked with his boys in building this area. Grandma's frail body was wracked by the cruel coughings of asthma, many times a day, when a small girl could only stand by and be sorry. But she was a frontier woman; she never complained.

She was so little, almost as little as the pig-tailed, freckle-nosed little girl who grew up to be me. Maybe it was her size that made her something special, not because of the melting goodness of brown sugar and butter on hot bread; not because she put patches on torn dresses with tiny little stitches; not because of the well of sweet water, or because she was always there when a little girl came across the road to call.

Arnolds Park

Looking west over the lake from site of former Arnolds Park hotel.

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